

Oberlin Conservatory

MAGAZINE



2018

A jazz master's gift
keeps on giving
P. 16

What can you do
with a double degree?
P. 22

A Pulitzer-winning
composer comes home
P. 32

Tech support you didn't
know you needed
P. 40



DALE PRESTON '83

HELPING HANDS
Children from schools
across northeast
Ohio visited campus
in April for an interactive
performance with the
Oberlin Orchestra.

Contents



Departments

- 4 [Of Note](#)
- 48 [Student Accolades](#)
- 50 [Class Notes](#)
- 58 [Faculty Notes](#)
- 62 [Losses](#)

Features

- 16 [The Legend Lives On](#)
Sonny Rollins passed through Oberlin numerous times. Now he's here to stay.
- 22 [It Takes Two](#)
What can you do with a double degree from Oberlin? Just about anything.
- 28 [Creating Connections](#)
New approaches to learning join the college and conservatory like never before.
- 32 [Bone Deep with Du Yun](#)
The celebrated composer returns to campus for *Angel's Bone*, the opera that earned her a Pulitzer.
- 38 [Wintry Mix](#)
Oberlin students discover a world of experiences each year during winter term.
- 40 [Tech Support](#)
8 ways technology makes life better at Oberlin.
- 46 [Follow the Lieder](#)
Philip Highfill's love of teaching extends far beyond the conservatory.



ON THE COVER: Sax master Sonny Rollins graced the stage of Finney Chapel five times from 1979 through 1996. In fall 2017, Rollins donated this Selmer Mark VI saxophone to Oberlin, along with a financial gift that supports the creation of the Sonny Rollins Jazz Ensemble.

Photo by Tanya Rosen-Jones '97.

Oberlin Conservatory MAGAZINE

Winner of the 2018 Silver Award for Periodical Design, presented by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education.

Director of Conservatory Communications
CATHY PARTLOW STRAUSS '84

Associate Director of Conservatory Communications
ERICH BURNETT

Senior Designer
RYAN SPROWL

Designer
NICOLE SLATINSKY

Contributors
JULIE GULENKO '15
KATHRYN METZ
JEREMY REYNOLDS '15

Director of Print and Publications
KELLY VIANCOURT

Vice President for Communications
BEN JONES '96

Dean of the Conservatory
ANDREA KALYN

Email: con.news@oberlin.edu
Web: www.oberlin.edu/con
Facebook: [oberlinconservatory](https://www.facebook.com/oberlinconservatory)
Twitter: [@oberlincon](https://twitter.com/oberlincon)
Instagram: [@oberlincon](https://www.instagram.com/oberlincon)

POSTMASTER
Send address changes to:
Oberlin Conservatory
Office of Communications
39 W. College St.,
Oberlin, OH 44074-1576



Billy Childs works with classical and jazz students in Oberlin's Performance & Improvisation program.

JULIE GULENKO '15

Childs Players

Oberlin students collaborate with composer-in-residence Billy Childs

GRAMMY AWARD-WINNING COMPOSER AND pianist Billy Childs has made his mark across the worlds of classical and jazz. In a yearlong collaboration with Oberlin, he deftly bridged those genres once again, taking students and audiences along for the ride.

Childs devoted a wide-ranging residency to working with student performers and composers from virtually every corner of the conservatory. It began in October with a master class, private lessons, and sessions with jazz and classical composition students, as well as auditions for spring concerts. Childs' April return included additional master classes and coaching sessions, plus a trio of collaborative performances on campus in a span of five days:

- A program with Oberlin Sinfonietta that included Childs' *Unrequited*: String Quartet No. 3 and his 2017 piece *Four Portraits for Violin*, played by violinist Asher Wulfman '20.
- A performance by Childs of his Grammy Award-winning 2001 composition *Into the Light* with Oberlin jazz and classical students, as well as other solo piano works.
- A collaboration between Childs, the Oberlin Chamber Orchestra, Oberlin College Choir, and the campus-community choir Musical Union that included Childs' 2005 creation *Voices of Angels*, featuring faculty vocalist La Tanya Hall and student vocalist Celine Opdycke '21.

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Childs was a star in area clubs by the time he graduated from the University of Southern California, earning gigs alongside Freddie Hubbard, J.J. Johnson, Joe Henderson, and Wynton Marsalis.

Influenced throughout his life by jazz, classical, and popular music, Childs has also met with great success as a composer. He has won five Grammy Awards and been nominated 14 times.

"Billy is a perfect example of someone who isn't inhibited by any musical genre barriers," says Bobby Ferrazza, chair of Oberlin's Division

of Jazz Studies. "We want our students to be forward-thinking, and Billy and this collaboration are great models for them."

The Oberlin residency came about through Professor of Composition Stephen Hartke, who met Childs while teaching at USC. Upon joining the Oberlin faculty in 2015, Hartke set about planning the residency with Ferrazza.

Violinist Wulfman was among the many students moved by the opportunity.

"It was an honor to have Billy Childs teach at Oberlin and to witness the powerful performances that he brought about through his music and his strong artistic vision," Wulfman says. "The two biggest things I took away from the experience are the confidence to push myself beyond the genre of music that I typically perform, and a desire to work closely with composers who are trying something new."

For Wulfman, learning music in the company of its creator was an experience unlike any other. "The process of learning and performing *Four Portraits for Violin* was very inspiring for me because I had the opportunity to construct my own interpretation of a piece that was so recently commissioned that it felt really fresh and uncharted," he says. "Working with him on *Four Portraits* felt like a real collaboration, and he never discouraged me from taking my own individual direction with the piece.

"On top of that, his experiments with combinations of style and harmony were new to me and emboldened me to try out new sounds that the classical repertoire doesn't often allow. For many of the students, it was our first time playing music so influenced by jazz harmony. I hope that these kinds of collaborations between the jazz and classical departments will continue, because it is vital that musicians become familiar with all different styles of music—and potentially discover new avenues for inspiration in the process."



Outreach Efforts Create Connections Near and Far

Oberlin students felt the power of music throughout the year in concerts aimed at captivating new audiences and bolstering those in need.

With the fall semester less than two weeks old, a contingent of Oberlin Conservatory musicians, alumni, and faculty joined forces with the Cleveland Orchestra and other northeast Ohio arts groups for a concert in support of hurricane relief. Help After Harvey: A Benefit Concert for the American Red Cross took

place September 8 at Severance Hall, the magnificent home of the Cleveland Orchestra. The \$24,000 in proceeds supported relief efforts in the wake of Hurricane Harvey's devastating effects in Texas and Louisiana.

In addition to more than two dozen current Oberlin students, the 88-member ensemble included Professor of Viola Peter Slowik, double bass teacher and Cleveland Orchestra member Scott Dixon '01, and violist Aaron Mossburg '13. Also taking part were students from the Cleveland Institute of Music and Credo Music, a faith-based nonprofit dedicated to developing young musicians with an emphasis on service.

The Oberlin ties also extended to the conductor's stand: James Feddeck '05, former assistant conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra, led the ensemble in a program that included Copland's heroic *Fanfare for the Common Man*, Barber's meditative *Adagio for Strings*, Stravinsky's colorful *Firebird* suite, and John Williams' cinematic *The Cowboys Overture*.

"It was a fantastic night of music making," says Slowik. "And it was a great concert because some who came to Severance Hall were Cleveland Orchestra subscribers, while others had never even heard a classical music concert—they all just wanted to help with the hurricane relief."

Just one week later, the Oberlin Orchestra ushered in the new year on campus with a first-of-its-kind musical welcome for the entire community. Called "So May I Introduce to You" (a play on the introductory shout-out from Paul McCartney in the Beatles' "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band"), the concert offered an interactive introduction to the orchestra, under the direction of Raphael Jiménez, including a performance of Silvestre Revueltas' vibrant composition *Sensemaya*.

The concert was preceded by a reception on the sun-splashed steps outside Finney Chapel and a prelude by the Oberlin Trombone

DUSTIN FRANZ



JULIE GULENKO '15, WALTER NOVAK, YEVHEN GULENKO

Choir, under the direction of Lee Allen. It concluded with Oberlin President Carmen Twillie Ambar conducting the orchestra in Strauss' *Radetzky March*.

In April, the Oberlin Orchestra connected with yet another new audience, this time welcoming more than 700 schoolchildren to Finney Chapel for a program featuring selections from Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*. Students from the conservatory's Division of Pedagogy, Advocacy, and Community Engagement (PACE) led the audience in interactive musical exercises, and four lucky children were selected to conduct the orchestra with Jiménez.

"We gained a glimpse of the details, planning, and pedagogical components that go into an outreach event of this magnitude," says violinist Hannah Schoepe '20, a PACE student who narrated the performance. "Going into the schools before the concert was truly inspiring. I realized what this event meant to the kids and gained an understanding of the big why—as in, why we were doing it."

Oberlin students engaged in many other outreach initiatives throughout the year. Learn more about some of those efforts in our coverage of winter term 2018, beginning on page 38.

Marilyn Horne Names Rubin Scholars for 2018

Distinguished Professor of Voice Marilyn Horne returned to Oberlin in April 2018 for her annual residency, featuring private lessons and public master classes with conservatory voice students. Horne's visits are a tradition that dates back 13 years; for the past five of them, the legendary mezzo-soprano has awarded \$10,000 in scholarships to outstanding students.

This year, the honor was extended to tenor Nicholas Music '18 and soprano Elise Thora Volkmann '18, each of whom received \$5,000 to be applied toward audition fees, travel expenses, or other costs associated with career development.

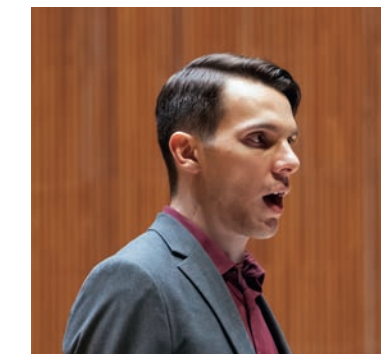
A busy year on campus for Music included roles in both mainstage operas—he portrayed Don Basilio in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and Peter Quint in Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*—as well as the role of Boy Angel in Oberlin's winter-term production of *Angel's Bone*, the Pulitzer Prize-winning opera by Du Yun '01 (see page 32). Music, who completed degrees in computer science and voice, concluded his Oberlin career with works from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Weill's *Street Scene* at a 2018 Commencement Recital. A former student of Timothy LeFebvre, he begins graduate studies at the

University of Michigan this fall. "I am so honored to receive the Rubin Scholarship," says Music. "This was my first time singing in her annual residency, so I never imagined that she would select me. Ms. Horne really knows how to showcase the voice, and she helped me to further push the boundaries of virtuosity in my arias."

Volkman opened 2017-18 with selections from Britten's *On this island* at Oberlin's Orientation Recital. In spring 2018, she performed Stephen Hartke's *Sons of Noah* at the University of Kentucky and Thomas Adès' *Life Story* with the Oberlin Sinfonietta. Her Oberlin Opera Theater credits include Handel's *Alcina* and Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* (pictured). A former student of Lorraine Manz, she completed a double degree in voice and German studies. She begins graduate work at the Peabody Institute this fall.

"To get to talk to someone who was doing opera when arguably it was in its prime, and someone who knows all the intricacies and has a direct link to all of the greats who came before her, is just really an invaluable experience," says Volkman. "She knows what she's talking about, and to get to hear it and try it for her is just amazing."

Horne's annual residency is made possible by philanthropist Stephen Rubin, president and publisher of Henry Holt & Co. and a longtime friend of Horne's. Rubin established the Marilyn Horne Professorship and Residency Fund in 2013.





Toothsome Treat

An Artist Recital Series engagement featuring the Grammy Award-winning vocal ensemble Roomful of Teeth served as a springboard for a large-scale collaboration with Oberlin singers. Months prior to the February 2018 concert, the ensemble's

founder and artistic director, Brad Wells, visited campus to work with the Oberlin College Choir and composer William Brittelle, whose piece *Psychedelics* was among those they would perform together.

In the days leading up to the show, Roomful of Teeth members—including bass-baritone Dashon Burton '05—took part in rehearsals (pictured) and shared their experiences with students in a composition forum,

professional development session, and Q&A with Pulitzer Prize-winning composer and ensemble member Caroline Shaw.

Brittelle's piece, like a lot of Roomful of Teeth's music, is a somewhat distant relative of the Western classical repertoire common in conservatory settings. "It's like nothing our students have ever had the chance to sing," says Gregory Ristow '01, Oberlin's director of choral ensembles. "In

addition to the classical singing techniques they're studying here at the conservatory, it involves three kinds of Tuvan throat singing and the wide, flat-vowel sound of traditional Bulgarian singing.

"So much of what—and how—Teeth sing just can't be notated in our standard Western notation system. For me and the choir, it's been a phenomenal learning experience in just how much of the music is not on the page."

Conservatory Project Among Top Entrepreneurial Pitches

Benjamin Steger '19, a double-degree student majoring in biochemistry and trumpet performance, was half of a team that earned pivotal funding through LaunchU, Oberlin College and Conservatory's entrepreneurship accelerator.

Steger and Bryan Rubin '18, an environmental studies and politics major in the college, earned second prize and \$10,000 in start-up funds for Virtu.Academy, a platform for digital music education. Their business model aims to build a nationwide network of music educators who provide affordable, convenient online lessons to middle school and high school students. "Coming into LaunchU, we

realized so many children do not have access to music education, and we thought technology could solve this," says Steger (pictured, right). "During the program, we reached out to band directors in Ohio, and the first response we received was, 'This has actually been an opportunity we've actively been seeking.' The band director told us not a single one of his 200 students had access to music lessons. We were so motivated by this and worked even harder to solve this problem. After one week, we had our first customer!"

The annual LaunchU pitch competition awarded a combined \$37,000 in start-up funding to four business ventures. The creators of 10 start-ups competed before a panel of judges and potential investors in March.

In first place, the team of Tessa Emmer '11, Catherine O'Hare '11, and Avery Resor received \$20,000

for their venture Salt Point Seaweed, a company that offers high-quality nutritional seaweed sustainably harvested by hand in Northern California.

The LaunchU pitch competition is the culmination of a venture incubator and intensive boot camp held primarily over winter term. Participants experience one-on-one mentorship and pitch prep in support of their launch. Seventeen ventures competed in a preliminary pitch competition on February 24.

"Having proven our idea during LaunchU, we are now working on expanding to more schools throughout the country," Steger says. "Without the knowledge, mentors, and resources we gained from LaunchU, none of this would be possible. The process of going from an idea to a real start-up, with customers, in the two weeks of LaunchU was an incredible experience."



Performance Celebrates—and Includes—Pianist Alice Takemoto '47

A March recital in Stull Hall paid tribute to Alice Takemoto and dozens of other Japanese American students who were welcomed by Oberlin between 1942 and 1945, a period when the U.S. forced Japanese Americans from the West Coast into internment camps.

The performance was part of a month-long series of events in conjunction with the public history exhibit *Courage and Compassion: Our Shared Story of the Japanese American World War II Experience*, on display in the Richard D. Baron '64 Art Gallery. It included stories of Oberlin's campus and community support of those who were displaced, bringing to life a chapter of American history that has reverberated into the present day.

Takemoto, a conservatory graduate who is now 91, was an honored guest—and a featured performer. The program consisted of works for solo violin and piano performed by Oberlin students; it closed with Mozart's Piano Quartet in G Minor, played by Takemoto with faculty violinist Sibbi Bernhardsson '95, violist Kirsten Docter '92, and cellist Catharina Meints.

YEVHEN GULENKO, DALE PRESTON '83

Sweden's Johan Dalene Wins 2017 Cooper Competition

Johan Dalene's exuberant performance of Tchaikovsky's Concerto in D Major with the Cleveland Orchestra concluded the final round of the 2017 Thomas and Evon Cooper International Competition and slammed the door on any doubt who would emerge victorious.

The 16-year-old violinist from Norrköping, Sweden, brought the Severance Hall audience to its feet in boisterous applause immediately after the final note. Dalene was awarded the top prize of \$20,000 and left the competition's two other Concerto Finalists vying for second place.

As it turned out, they both earned it.

Christina Jihee Nam of West Chester, Ohio, and Qing Yu Chen of New York, New York, shared second prize. Each of them took home a prize of \$7,500.

All three Concerto Finalists were also offered full-tuition scholarships to attend the Oberlin Conservatory of Music.

"I saw the best Tchaikovsky Concerto that I've ever heard," Gregory Fulkerson, longtime director of the Cooper Violin Competition, said from the stage moments after Dalene was named the winner. "I've been waiting 60 years to hear someone take the Tchaikovsky Concerto and understand the score so profoundly that he can take it to the world and interpret it in precisely the way the composer intended. It was simply spectacular."

Founded in 2010, the Cooper Competition is dedicated to presenting an important international competitive opportunity to highly accomplished young musicians. It is made possible through the generosity of Thomas Cooper, a 1978 graduate of Oberlin College, and his wife, pianist Evon Cooper. The Cooper Competition alternates annually between piano and violin and is open to participants between the ages of 13 and 18.

Dalene and Oberlin will be reunited early in 2019: The violinist will perform with the Oberlin Orchestra at Carnegie Hall in January.



OBERLIN CONSERVATORY ON TOUR

NEW YORK CITY | JANUARY 2019

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16

OBERLIN SONNY ROLLINS JAZZ ENSEMBLE
Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola at Lincoln Center
New York City debut

FRIDAY, JANUARY 18

OBERLIN COLLEGE CHOIR
Gregory Ristow, director
Venue to be announced

SATURDAY, JANUARY 19

OBERLIN ORCHESTRA
Raphael Jiménez, conductor
Carnegie Hall
Featuring violin soloist Johan Dalene, 2017 Cooper International Competition champion

STAY TUNED FOR DETAILS

OBERLIN
COLLEGE & CONSERVATORY

The World Comes to Oberlin

Oberlin students interact with countless esteemed guest artists each year. Through performances, master classes, lectures, and more, these exceptional musicians provide immersive experiences that are integral to students' artistic and professional growth—and to the cultural richness of the entire Oberlin community. Following is a look back at the guests who visited in 2017-18.

ALUMNI MASTER CLASSES, LECTURES & CONCERTS

Matthew Adomeit '13, jazz bass
Boris Allakhverdyan '06, clarinet
Tony Arnold '90, soprano
Matthew Covey '91, arts immigration law
Anne Gross '86, soprano
John Kander '51, composer
Tim Munro AD '02, flute
Punch Brothers, featuring guitarist Chris Eldridge '04
Roomful of Teeth, featuring bass-baritone Dashon Burton '05
Steven Shaiman '86, senior VP, Concert Artists Guild
Robert Spano '84, conductor
Beth Wenstrom '03, conductor-violinist
Du Yun '01, composer

RESIDENCIES

William Brittle, composer
Billy Childs, composer-pianist
John Liberatore, composer
Caroline Shaw, composer-singer-violinist
Brad Wells, conductor
Albert Xu, acoustician
Mimi Xu, performance artist

PIANO

Andrew Armstrong
Paul Badura-Skoda
Xak Bjerken
Alan Chow
Ran Dank
Peter Frankl
Benjamin Grosvenor
Alexander Korsantia
Michael McMahon
William Naboré
Ursula Oppens
Sandra Shapiro
Martino Tirino
Hong Xu

STRINGS

Brentano String Quartet
Colin Carr, cello
Maria Christina Cleary, harp
Bruno Destrez, luthier-bass
Erika Eckert, viola
Paul Ellison, bass
Pamela Frank, violin
Peter Herresthal, violin
Kikuei Ikeda, violin
Solomiya Ivakhiv, violin
Hyun Mi Kim, violin
Tessa Lark, violin
Alan Rafferty, cello
John Stulz, viola
Kimberly Sutton, cello
Akemi Takayama, violin
William van der Sloot, violin
Andrew Scott Young, bass

VOICE

Gerald Finley, bass-baritone
Marilyn Horne, mezzo-soprano
Danielle Orlando, accompanist-vocal coach
Royce Vavrek, librettist

WINDS, BRASS & PERCUSSION

Ariana Ghez, oboe
Eugene Izotov, oboe
Julian Kirshner, percussionist
Steve Lehman, saxophone-composition
Eugenia Moliner, flute
Emily Pailthorpe, oboe

ORGAN

Matteo Imbruno
Vincent Warnier

JAZZ

Zach Brock, violin
Simone Cristicchi, guitar
Gerrit Hatcher, saxophone
Tamir Hendelman, piano
Phil Markowitz, piano

ORCHESTRA

The Cleveland Orchestra

GUITAR

Sérgio Assad
Denis Azabagić
Jorge Caballero
René Izquierdo
Xavier Jara
Matthew McAllister
Benjamin Verdery

HISTORICAL PERFORMANCE

Malcolm Bilson, piano
Jan de Winne, Baroque flute
Flanders Recorder Quartet
Jeanne Lamon, violin
Nigel North, Baroque lute

PERFORMANCE & IMPROVISATION (PI)

Beyond Boundaries
Duo Violão Brasil

LECTURES

Bill Behrendt, Ohio Citizens for the Arts
Timothy Anne Burnside, curator, National Museum of African American History and Culture
Aurélie Decourt, musicologist
Anne Fitzgibbon, youth arts advocate, the Harmony Program
Kenneth Freundlich, entertainment lawyer
Jason King, director, Clive Davis Institute of Recorded Music
Howard Nelson, physical therapist
Justin Nigro, Ohio Arts Council
Ann Powers, NPR critic
Dwandalyn Reece, curator of music and performing arts, National Museum of African American History and Culture
Richard Taruskin, musicologist



Punch Brothers



Ursula Oppens



Paul Badura-Skoda



Sergio Assad



The Cleveland Orchestra



Nina Lee of Brentano String Quartet



Benjamin Grosvenor



Peter Frankl



Jeanne Lamon



Tony Arnold

Oberlin Forges Partnership with Shanghai Conservatory

Two years after the Shanghai National Conservatory of Music was founded in 1927, a young composer named Huang Tzu became its director of academic affairs and a lecturer in music theory and composition. A 1926 graduate of Oberlin, Huang played an integral role in introducing the Western traditions he experienced at Oberlin to the teaching of music in China.

Almost 90 years later, Oberlin and Shanghai have rekindled a relationship that once again draws upon Oberlin expertise.

In May 2018, Dean of the Conservatory Andrea Kalyn, Executive Director of Piano Technology John Cavanaugh, and International Outreach Coordinator Kai Fu '06 met with officials from the Shanghai Conservatory to formalize a new partnership that will lead to the formation of a piano technology teaching program at Shanghai as well as plans for a new graduate-level degree in piano technology that will involve study at both institutions.

In the coming years, Oberlin's partnership with Shanghai will also promote student and faculty exchanges that could involve departments throughout both conservatories. Beginning in fall 2018, faculty from Shanghai will participate in a residency at Oberlin in which they will perform on traditional Chinese instruments and work with Oberlin ethnomusicology students and faculty.

"The partnership between Oberlin and the Shanghai Conservatory reflects our mutual commitment to musical excellence and shared appreciation of the power of music to bring people together across difference," Kalyn says. "We look forward to building on the 90-year



connection between our two institutions in ways that advance our students' professional preparation and deepen their understanding across cultures and genres."

Since its inception in 2014, Oberlin's piano tech program has emerged as a world leader in the training of advanced technicians. In the coming years, Cavanaugh (pictured, standing center) will oversee the creation of Shanghai's state-of-the-art piano tech shop, while the first students of the nascent program will begin their training at Oberlin. The new pact with Shanghai will consist of three years of study—two of them in Oberlin—toward a master's degree in piano technology conferred by the Shanghai Conservatory.

PIANO TECH MILESTONES

The partnership also represents the latest in a series of growth spurts for Oberlin's piano technology department, which since 2014 has offered an exclusive artist diploma program for the training of advanced technicians.

For the first time, the two-year program will offer enhanced opportunities for second-year students to receive off-site training at Steinway's New York factory. It begins with a week of intensive, hands-on instruction at Steinway, followed by a return trip in which each student will be tasked with preparing two grand pianos for selection in one week; each student's performance will be graded by Steinway's technical department.

Oberlin holds the distinction of being the world's only Steinway-authorized training facility apart from the manufacturer's own Hamburg and New York City factories. Oberlin owns more than 240 Steinway grand pianos and was the first institution to be named an "All-Steinway School," a designation conferred in 1877.

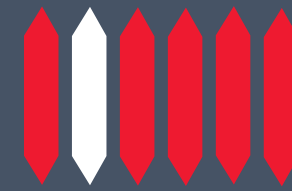
"Oberlin and Steinway share a remarkable history of more than 140 years," says Cavanaugh. "There could be no more fitting capstone to this program than for our second-year students to apply their skills and be evaluated at the very heart of the Steinway company. We

are deeply honored to join Steinway in creating this opportunity for our students."

Back on campus, this summer marks the 15th anniversary of the Steinway at Oberlin seminar, part of the C.F. Theodore Steinway Technical Academy. The program focuses on strategies for institutional piano technicians and welcomes more than a dozen technicians from around the world each July. This year's seminar will feature the debut of Oberlin's newly expanded and renovated piano technology shop, which is equipped to handle four full piano restorations concurrently.

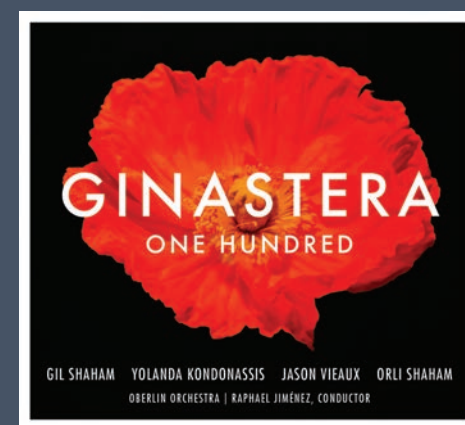
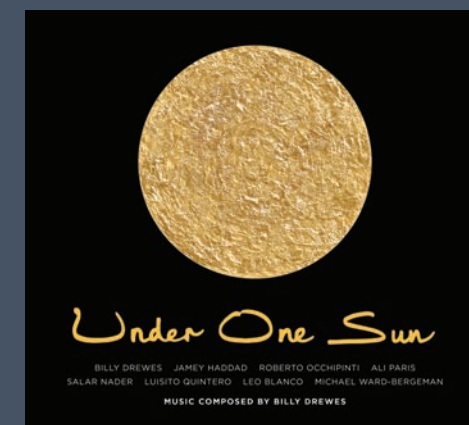
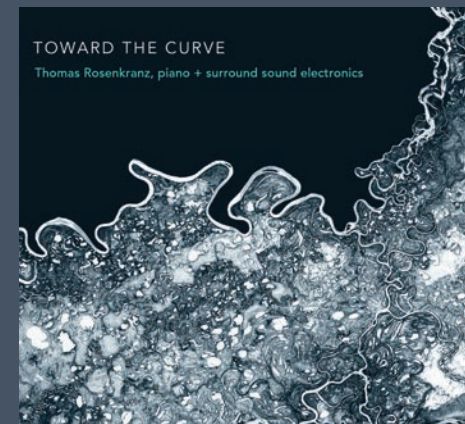
Also new for 2018: the first piano technology summer intensive for Chinese students. The week-long program is intended for students currently pursuing bachelor's degrees in piano technology elsewhere who may want to continue their studies at Oberlin. Classes are taught by Oberlin technicians and translated into Chinese by current students in the artist diploma program. To learn more about piano technology at Oberlin, visit oberlin.edu/piano-technology.

THIS PAGE: JULIE GULENKO '15; PREVIOUS SPREAD: JULIE GULENKO '15, YEVHEN GULENKO, LARRY KASPEREK, WALTER NOWAK, DALE PRESTON '83



OBERLIN MUSIC

THE OFFICIAL RECORD LABEL OF THE OBERLIN CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC



Celebrating the artistic vision and extraordinary talent of Oberlin faculty, students, and alumni.

www.oberlin.edu/oberlinmusic

THE LEGEND LIVES ON

Sonny Rollins passed through Oberlin numerous times.
Now he's here to stay. By Erich Burnett

OVER A CAREER SPANNING SEVEN DECADES, Sonny Rollins left an indelible mark on the international jazz world. Now the saxophone legend and composer has done the same for Oberlin.

In fall 2017, Rollins designated a generous donation for the purpose of establishing and maintaining the Oberlin Conservatory of Music Sonny Rollins Jazz Ensemble Fund. At the heart of the gift is the formation of an exclusive student ensemble whose members will be charged with sharing their artistry as well as their generosity in performances and outreach efforts. In these ways, the chosen students will carry forward a legacy exemplified by Rollins and other jazz greats of his generation.

A phenom in the jazz world while still in his teens, Rollins was already playing and recording with Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, and Bud

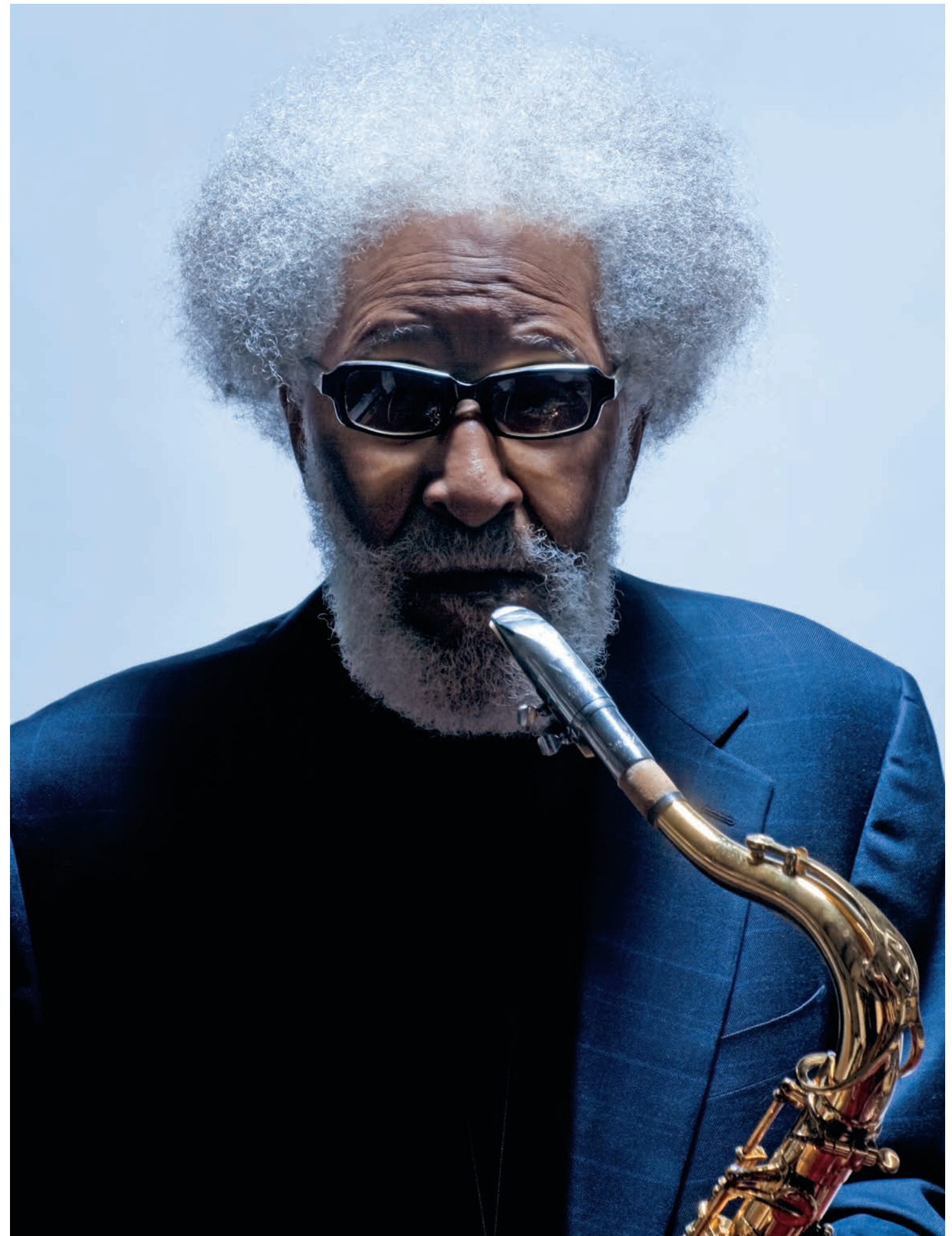
Powell by his early 20s. His gift to Oberlin grew out of his acquaintance with author and musician James McBride, a 1979 graduate of Oberlin Conservatory. The gift was made in recognition of the institution's long legacy of access and social justice advocacy. In particular, Rollins, now 87, was moved by Oberlin's place as the first institution of higher learning to adopt a policy to admit students of color and the first to confer degrees to women. He also noted the contributions of alumni such as Will Marion Cook, a black violinist and composer who attended Oberlin in the 1880s, later studied with Antonín Dvořák, and went on to become an important teacher and mentor to Duke Ellington.

Commitment to inclusive excellence and social impact remains foundational to Oberlin's educational mission. Likewise, Rollins has long derived meaning through

service to others—an attitude widely believed to have been cultivated during a 1969-70 break in his performance career, a period during which he explored meditation, yoga, and Eastern philosophies in India.

"That the legendary Sonny Rollins—an artist of truly extraordinary accomplishment, soulfulness, and character—would entrust Oberlin to steward his legacy is the highest honor, and deeply humbling," says Dean of the Conservatory Andrea Kalyn. "We are so very grateful to James McBride—whose own life and work stands in testament to Oberlin's values—for shepherding this gift, which has a singular power to demonstrate for our students the full dimension of their obligation as musicians in this world, to inspire them to fulfill that obligation far beyond their years as students, and so to advance Oberlin's own legacy of impact." ▶

JOHN ABBOTT





Rollins' gift to Oberlin includes this 1968 Selmer Mark VI saxophone, which he frequently used in concert and on recordings. The sax had been customized for Rollins with a built-up key that bears his initials (inset below).



A MAN OF GREAT HUMILITY

Born in New York City in 1930, Walter Theodore "Sonny" Rollins started playing the saxophone at age 8, receiving guidance from pianist and composer Thelonious Monk. By the time he finished high school, Rollins was playing professionally in the Harlem clubs near his home.

Across seven decades of performing, Rollins collaborated with countless jazz luminaries, from Miles Davis to McCoy Tyner, and made more than 60 records showcasing his unsurpassed improvisational chops and distinct compositional voice. He won multiple Grammy Awards, including a 2004 award for lifetime achievement, and was honored with the National Medal of Arts in 2010.

McBride praises Rollins not only for his musicianship, but for his "humility, deep spirituality, and a reflective studiousness that included the study of religion, philosophy, and existentialism."

"His immense musical vocabulary, creative originality, and profound body of work mark him as one of the greatest musicians of any serious music, no matter what name it is given, no matter what era or century in which it was made," McBride has said of Rollins.

In 2016, Rollins handed over his personal archives to the New York Public Library. The experience led him to consider possible recipients of a financial gift that could support the education of jazz musicians. Enter McBride, who discussed with Rollins Oberlin's legacy of social justice as well as its faculty of teacher-musicians who have made their own marks on concert stages as Rollins did throughout his life—some of them, including drummer Billy Hart, onstage alongside Rollins.

THE SONNY ENSEMBLE

Beginning in fall 2018, Oberlin jazz studies majors—including incoming first-year students—may audition for the Oberlin Sonny Rollins Jazz Ensemble, which will be known as "the Sonny Ensemble." Students may be accepted into the ensemble at any time during their Oberlin careers.

Each student's candidacy will be considered on the basis of four criteria: an audition for Oberlin's jazz faculty, evidence of academic achievement, thoughtful response to a question about the place of jazz in the world, and service to humanity. ▶

Q&A

ROLLINS RIFFS

The sax master reflects on his life in music and his connection to Oberlin.

Your involvement with Oberlin is a great honor for the entire institution as well as its extended family. Why did you bring your gift here?

The thing about Oberlin is its great social history—impeccable history. I began reading up on Oberlin, and I found out a lot of things. I always knew it was very socially progressive. And then I found out more: about its relationship with the Underground Railroad and that [abolitionist] John Brown has history at Oberlin. And I understand that the first black student to matriculate in the United States matriculated at Oberlin, and also the first woman. That was absolutely fantastic.

I am privileged to be a part of Oberlin in any way that I can be. It's not about you being happy to have me. I'm happy to be involved with Oberlin. It's an honor and a privilege to be involved in any way with Oberlin.

With this gift, you're also giving each student a command to live a life of service. How did the importance of service develop in you?

I didn't have much schooling. I didn't go to university. I graduated from high school, and that was it. It was the university of the streets, as they say. After that, of course,

I was very fortunate: I was talented. I had a musical gift. And I became associated with a lot of great artists who enhanced my playing. One thing that I realized was that, especially today, it's not enough to be a gifted musician and to be able to play. It wouldn't be enough when I was growing up, and it's definitely not enough now. My life has shown me that you have to have something else in order to live. And a successful life is not just having a great talent. Life is about giving, not taking.

James McBride was instrumental in my realizing that we could put this into the curriculum. The students have to do some kind of community service, and that's all to understand that a successful life is about giving back. That way you're honoring this great gift that you have.

You played with many of jazz's all-time greatest musicians. What would you want future generations to know about them?

It's been a learning process, and I am still learning, of course, which is what makes it all so beautiful. One of the things that I'd like to try to get the students to understand is that the great people that I've been fortunate to play with...they were all beautiful people.

Each one of them. They were all good people.

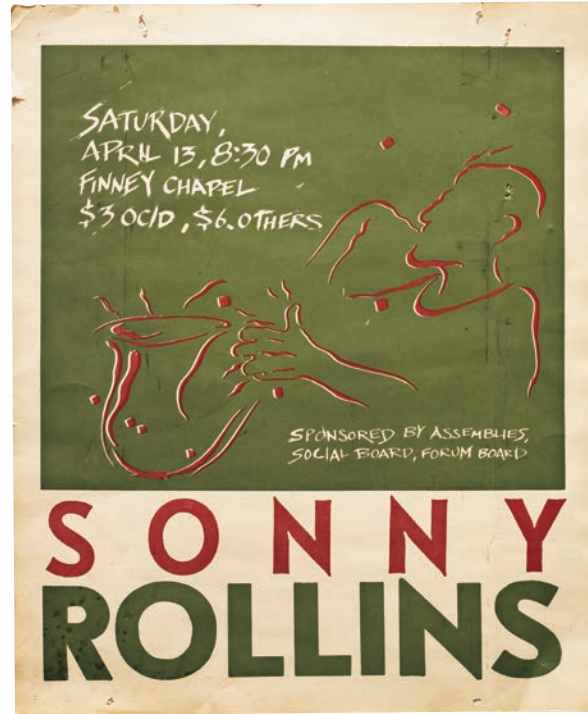
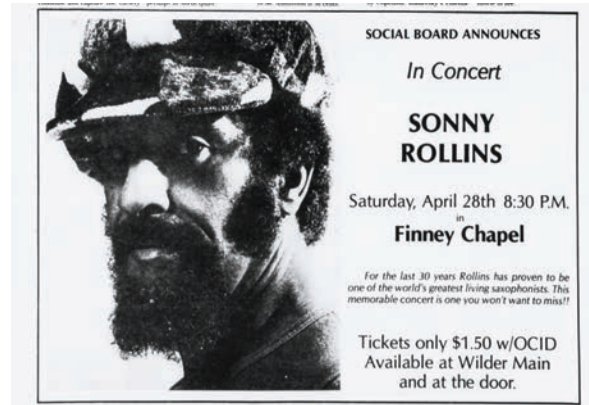
So if these students want to think about some guys that they know ... whether it be Miles Davis or Coltrane or Thelonious Monk or Bud Powell, Charlie Parker ... They were good people in very hard situations, and they exemplified what I would like to see these students try to emulate, as well as emulating their music. Like [Oberlin Jazz Studies founder] Wendell Logan. I didn't even know Wendell Logan, but I knew of him. And that's the type of spirit that these students should have. Oberlin is the perfect place to try to preach that to them.

Your gift to Oberlin will have a resounding impact on young musicians for many years to come. How does that make you feel?

Well, it's beyond words. I don't know. It's too much to conceive of. I just hope that it helps the big picture along. I hope it's a positive help in the world and in the society that we live in. I just hope that these talented people coming out of a great institution—the greatest, Oberlin—that they really shed light wherever they go, wherever they play, wherever they sing, wherever it is they do what they do. Shed light and realize that life is about the golden rule.

ALWAYS SONNY IN OBERLIN

Sonny Rollins' storied career intersected with Oberlin five times, beginning with an April concert in 1979 (see *Oberlin Review* ad, below) and concluding in September 1996.



A poster promoting Rollins' 1985 concert (left) hung for decades in the studio of Michael Rosen. The percussion professor also held onto a Rollins poster from 1981 (bottom left), which was displayed for several years at the Local, a coffeehouse in downtown Oberlin. The *Review* previewed Rollins' Finney Chapel concerts in 1990 (below) and '96 (far right).

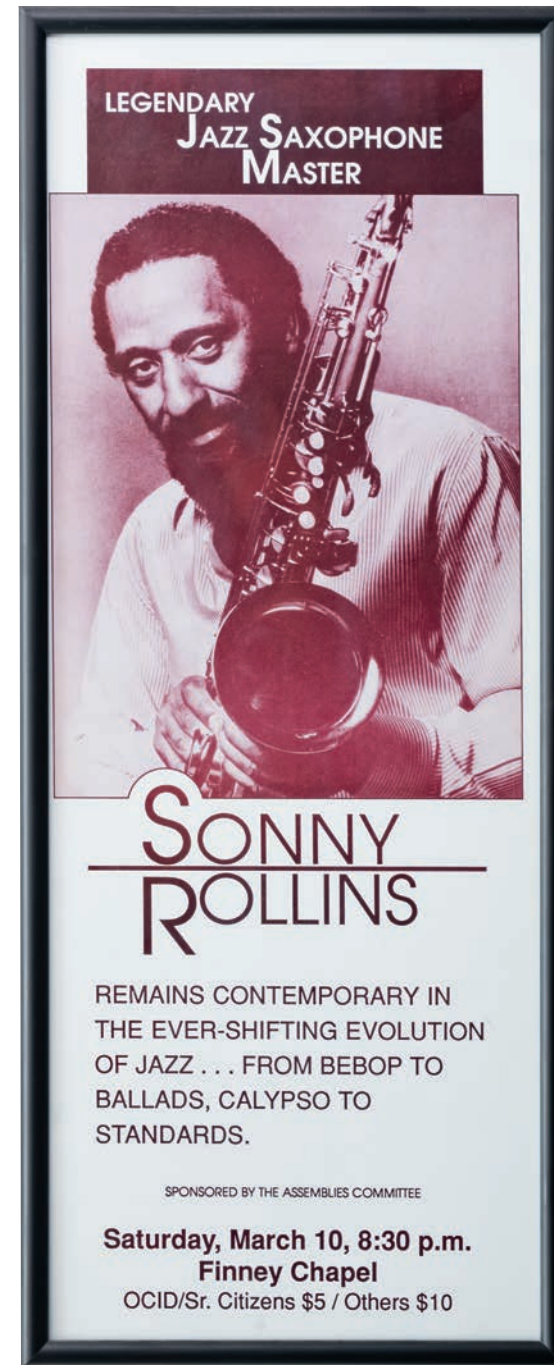
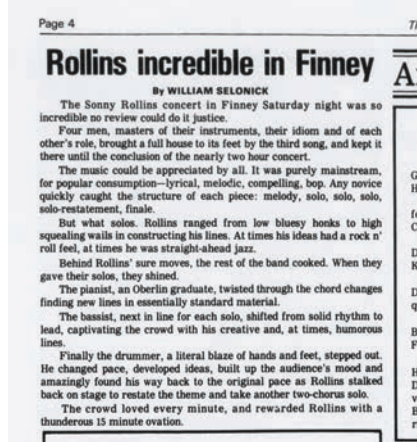
Sonny Rollins dishes out eclectic sax jazz

Dan Fisher
 What do Miles Davis, John Coltrane, and Thelma Houston have in common? For one thing, they have all shared the stage with Sonny Rollins.
 All you need is five dollars to see this legendary saxophone player live in Oberlin. Take your five-dollar bill, present it to the three persons behind the Wilder desk, and demand a ticket, because they are selling fast.
 Connoisseurs of jazz may ask, "Five dollars? Do you realize that I can buy three packs of cigarettes with five dollars? What can I expect from Sonny Rollins for such an expense?" If you asked Rollins, this is what he would tell you:
 "Well, you can expect somewhat of an eclectic show. We'll do a lot of different things, some ballads, some blues which are pretty straight ahead, some Caribbean stuff. I mean, we do several different types of music in our shows, and I'm sure we'll be doing that at Oberlin," he said.
 Sonny Rollins began his illustrious professional career in 1949 at age 18, when jazz great Miles Davis hired him to tour with a small group. Since then, Rollins has become one of the most respected musicians in jazz, considered by some to be the greatest living tenor saxophone player.
 "Well, I'm always searching for new things that always goes on," Rollins said. "I'm always looking for new things that I can use in my own playing and that will be interesting to the people. I'm always on the lookout for things like that."
 "On the other hand, I realize that I represent the mainstream in many ways, you know, but even with representing the mainstream I'm always looking for new ways of expression within that mainstream," he added.
 Rollins recently released a new album, *Fading In Love With Jazz*, which, he explained, is a little different from his previous album, *Changing in The Dark*.
 "The difference basically is that I have some guests on this album, Jack DeJohnette, Bradford Marshall, Tommy Flanagan, while the other album, *Changing In The Dark*, was basically a group album with my working group, you know?
 "This working band, accompanying Rollins on Saturday night, consists of bassist Jerome Harris, Al Foster on drums, Cliff Anderson on trombone, and Mark Sullivan playing keyboards."
 "I haven't been there [Oberlin] in quite a few years, and it's always nice to come to Oberlin," he said. "I think I've played there three or four times in the past, and so it's nice to be there again. We try to do the same thing all the time."
 "We have to play hard and desperately all the time, you know, that doesn't change, we've always got to be on. We always have to be on top of what we're doing, we have to give one hundred percent," he said.
 "These are words to live by, and if Rollins does, the audience is in for a brilliant concert on Saturday night.
 Seeking it had for you anyway.
 Sonny Rollins will be performing in Finney Chapel tomorrow night at 8:30. Tickets are \$10, \$5 w/OCID.

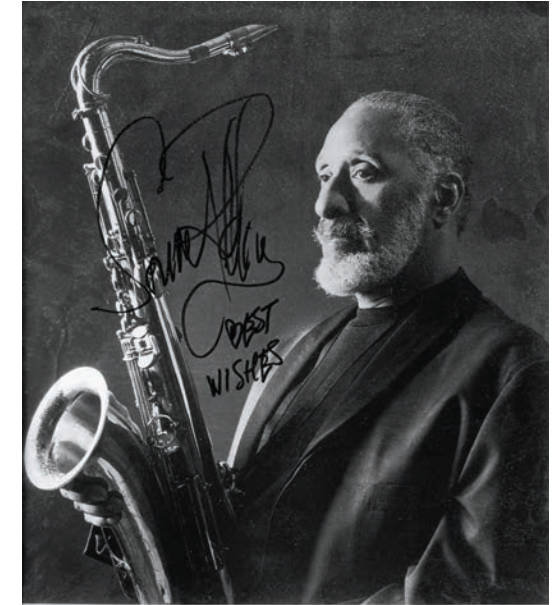
For years, student activities director Tina Zwegat has played a key role in bringing touring artists to campus, including Rollins in 1996. "You often hear people say about a musician, 'He makes his instrument talk,'" she says. "The first time I really understood what that meant was when I heard Sonny Rollins play in Finney Chapel. That is exactly what he did."



Rollins' 1981 concert was covered by the *Oberlin Review* (above) and immortalized in the yearbook (right).



A poster for Rollins' 1990 gig (left) still hangs on the second floor of Wilder Hall. On the first floor is a signed portrait from Rollins' most recent visit to campus (bottom).



Variable in size, the Sonny Ensemble will perform in flexible configurations in both formal settings and outreach programs, in venues across the region and around the world. The Sonny Ensemble's inaugural class will be welcomed with a reception in the fall of 2018, the unofficial launch of a 30th anniversary celebration of the jazz studies major at Oberlin. Members, called "Sonny Scholars," must dedicate at least two semesters to performing in the ensemble. One of the Sonny Ensemble's first gigs will be its debut in Rollins' lifelong hometown of New York, as part of a January

tour that includes the Oberlin Orchestra and Oberlin College Choir. The ensemble will perform at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola, a fixture of the Jazz at Lincoln Center complex in Midtown Manhattan. **THERE'S SOMETHING BIGGER** More than a mere spot in an elite unit, membership in the Sonny Ensemble requires a commitment to service through music and willingness to give. Sonny Scholars fulfill this mission in part through a required winter-term project—approved by each student's

principal studio teacher—that embodies Rollins' spirit of giving. In this way and others, each musician in the ensemble is an ambassador not just for jazz, but for all people. "The humanity element has to be a big presence in everything young players do," says Rollins. "People are hungry for a reason to live and to be happy. We're asking these young musicians to look at the big picture, to tap into the universal power of a higher spirit, so they can give people what they need. Giving back to others teaches inner peace and inner spirituality. Everything is

going to be open for them if they devote themselves in this way." Each ensemble member's commitment will be memorialized in the Sonny Scholar Ledger, a volume that declares each musician's adherence to the principle of giving. The ledger is emblazoned with these words from Rollins: "Trust that later on in life, there's something bigger for you when you serve others." The first signature is that of Rollins. The Sonny Scholar Ledger will be permanently displayed in the Bertram and Judith Kohl Building, home of Oberlin's

Division of Jazz Studies. Rollins' gift also includes a Selmer Mark VI tenor saxophone that will be displayed alongside the ledger. One of many saxophones Rollins owned and played during his extensive career, the 1968 model gifted to Oberlin was used in concert and on recordings. It will be displayed with a reed used by Rollins and a mouthpiece that had been given to him many years ago by fellow saxman and friend Yusef Lateef. "This gift is incredibly powerful for us," says Bobby Ferrazza, professor of jazz guitar and director of the Division of Jazz

Studies. "It creates a direct link for our students to one of the greatest musicians in the history of jazz—and to his ideals. In aspiring to participate in this group, our students will be imbued with the humanity and musical values established by Mr. Rollins himself. The founding principles of the ensemble will be singularly inspirational for our department, today and for generations to come." ■ **Interested in supporting the Sonny Ensemble? Visit www.oberlin.edu/donate, email giving@oberlin.edu, or call 440-775-8273.**

It Takes Two

What can you do with a double degree from Oberlin?
Just about anything.

During my time at Oberlin, I often joked that as a double-degree student with majors in clarinet performance and English lit, I would make an exceptionally erudite waiter. As it turns out, I do write on notepads for a living now, but not as a server: I'm the classical music critic and reporter for the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.

I entered Oberlin thinking I'd play professionally with an orchestra someday, never dreaming that I would wind up penning prose about the performances of others instead. During my second year, however, I discovered a zest for writing,

and so I later enrolled in journalism and music criticism courses and worked for the college newspaper. I actually did chat my way through a very brief stint as a server while studying arts journalism in grad school at Syracuse University. And after a spell working on staff at an orchestra in Texas, a former Oberlin teacher and mentor recommended me for the *Post-Gazette*.

Every day, I juggle interviews, deadlines, concerts, newsroom meetings, and a handful of freelance projects. And every day, I draw on my conservatory training as well as my critical writing



By Jeremy Reynolds '15

chops. Do I enjoy reviewing and investigating the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra more than I'd have liked playing in that orchestra? Actually, yes. It's fun. It's fascinating. I love the rush of hearing the final glorious cadence of a Bruckner symphony,

basking for a moment in that post-concert glow, and then dashing through the snow or rain to a wi-fi hotspot near the concert hall and frantically typing my thoughts in time for the next day's paper.

It's a path that would not have been open to me if I hadn't been a double-degree student. The Double Degree Program remains one of Oberlin's most attractive features, especially for those looking to broaden their post-college options. While some alumni lean more heavily on one degree than another, others—like me—have merged their interests, often seamlessly.

Of course, balancing full course loads in both the conservatory and college isn't a cakewalk. In each graduating class at Oberlin, about 40 students earn a double degree. And while five years is typical for completion of those degrees, more than a third of them finish in less time than that.

The following interviews with Oberlin double-degree alumni show a unity in appreciation for the program and incredible diversity in occupations, from sound editors to journalists to doctors—and of course, musicians. The limits to what you can do reside solely with you.



The Peter Pan Effect

NAME: Faith Seetoo '88 JOB: Conductor MAJORS: Piano and Psychology

As a conductor of touring Broadway shows, Faith Seetoo isn't in the business of psychoanalyzing her musicians. But her studies in that field certainly inform the work she does today.

"Psychology at the very basic level is people skills, or being able to read a room," she says.

The Los Angeles native first developed an interest in musical theater while seeing *Peter Pan* when she was around 12 years old. "I was beginning to understand that I was interested in girls, so here I was, watching Sandy Duncan as Peter Pan, playing the role of

a boy, which was very exciting for me," she says with a laugh.

A young Seetoo wrote to the conductor asking how to become a Broadway pit keyboardist. *Practice hard, and it's who you know* came his reply. Seetoo took those words to heart, following her Oberlin studies with additional work at the Grove School of Music, where she met a musician who had been the best man for the keyboardist of the *Phantom of the Opera* tour. Eventually, Seetoo launched her Broadway career subbing for that keyboardist.

As she found her interests

drifting to the conductor's stand, she studied in New York for a time before landing a gig conducting the *Phantom of the Opera* tour. She's currently on the road with *Aladdin*.

Seetoo likens conducting to riding a horse and giving as much rein as possible. "That way, people have ownership of their performance, and they feel free to contribute," she explains. "And my psych studies totally play into this. I use my training all the time, just not in a technical manner. It's about being able to see how different people respond to different things."



From Björk to Buzz Lightyear

NAME: Kendra Juul '01 JOB: Animation Editor MAJORS: TIMARA and English Literature

Kendra Juul studied in the English and TIMARA departments at Oberlin, and her first experiences after college included work in sound design and video editing for educational toys, movies, and animation. So now she works—of course—at Pixar.

"This is kind of the synthesis of everything I've done up until now," she says. "Animation editorial has a lot of opportunity for creative participation on the story level, which pulls on my English degree in terms of thematic development, character development, plot structure—down to even wording choices and being able to suggest lines. And then on the TIMARA side, as an animation sound editor, we do a lot of sound-effect design and sometimes even temp music cutting."

Juul grew up in New Jersey and started college at New York University before realizing that she craved a small-school experience. At Oberlin, she experimented with various courses before falling in love with TIMARA. "It just kind of blew my mind," she recalls. "I was a huge fan of Björk and all of these women using multi-track recorders and electronic sounds. I wanted to know how they were doing what they're doing."

After Oberlin, Juul moved to the Bay Area and started working in sound editing and animation for LeapFrog, a children's educational toy manufacturer. She later edited video for post-production companies before starting at Pixar about two and a half years ago. She's working now on the upcoming sequel *Toy Story 4*.

"It really is a fabulous place, not to toot Pixar's horn," she says. "It draws on a lot of the various aspects of what I learned in school and all of the work history that I had up until this point. It's pretty wild."



The Beijing Scene

NAME: **Terry Hsieh '12** JOB: **Trombonist and School Administrator**
MAJORS: **East Asian Studies and Jazz Studies**

"I enrolled in ancient Greek during my first year at Oberlin and absolutely hated it," Terry Hsieh remembers.

He had studied Latin and Spanish in high school and intended on declaring a classics major at Oberlin. But Greek proved a fortunate roadblock.

"I didn't realize that was the hardest part of the classics major at the time, at least for the Latin students," he says. "So I pretty much did a 180-degree turn and bailed."

Though he'd never envisioned himself becoming a professional musician, Hsieh loved to play and auditioned for the conservatory as a jazz trombonist during his sophomore year. He left classics behind in a formal sense, but he retained a love of language and learned to

speak fluent Chinese.

While studying in China during the summer of 2009, Hsieh happened upon the small but vibrant jazz scene in Beijing. He returned to the city in 2010 and in subsequent years to tour with his ensemble, the Terry Hsieh Collective.

Now he runs a jazz program at the International School of Beijing. ("I always tell my students that I thought the Double Degree Program was one of the coolest opportunities anybody could have," he says.) He also founded the Blue Note Beijing Jazz Orchestra and plays with various jazz and pop groups, some of them quite famous throughout Asia.

"Jazz is still really fresh here," Hsieh says. "It's a tight community of great musicians,

so being involved with that is a no-brainer. There's not a lot of job security, but there's a lot of work. There's a lot more work here for a jazz musician than in the U.S., I think."

Hsieh relies heavily on both halves of his education in every aspect of his career, for which he's constantly working with local Chinese musicians and non-native artists.

"Running bilingual rehearsals can be taxing if you're not completely fluent," says Hsieh, who has maintained his affinity for language and the classics even though his path ultimately led him in a different direction.

"Sometimes I still like to sit down and read Latin because I love it, and because I can. It's sort of like climbing a mountain."



Song Arm of the Law

NAME: **Marisa Novak '15** JOB: **Law Student**
MAJORS: **Vocal Performance and History**

Marisa Novak is no stranger to the spotlight. A trained opera singer, she recently completed her first year of law school at the University of California, Los Angeles, where she's digging into entertainment law. Now the poise she developed on concert stages will serve her well in the courtroom too.

"A lot of people here are like 'Wow, why did you major in opera?' It completely baffles them," she says. "But even though I'm not pursuing classical music as a career, I have absolutely no regrets about doing that. Being a voice major gave me a lot of intangible skills."

Much as she loved singing, Novak decided during her third year at Oberlin that a career in opera wasn't for her. She had been considering law school for years and took a constitutional law class during her fifth year. With that, she was hooked.

After Oberlin, she interned at the American Opera Project in New York City, then worked at 21C Media Group, the PR firm that represents many of the biggest names in classical music. She spent her free time studying for the LSAT and applying to law schools, ultimately settling on UCLA.

"It's a way to merge all of my interests," she says. "I would love to do music law, but it's a very niche part of the industry, in general. The goal is to work for a small boutique law firm—doing music law—or for a bigger entertainment company in their business and entertainment division."

She still sings in a lawyer's choir called Legal Voices. "I know, I know—you can laugh at the name," she says. "It meets like once a week, and it's super fun. There's just something theatrical about being a lawyer!"

Investment Opportunity

NAME: **Julia Steyn '96** JOB: **Auto Industry Executive** MAJORS: **Piano and Economics**

Julia Steyn arrived in the U.S. from Volgograd, Russia, with \$30 in her pocket and a full scholarship to study piano at Interlochen Arts Academy. She was accepted to Oberlin on a full scholarship as well.

"In Russia, the way careers work is you start something really young and you get really good at it, and it becomes your career," says Steyn, who began playing piano at the age of 3. "I never dreamt that I could do more than one thing, so when I discovered that you could pursue two careers at once at Oberlin, it was such a shock to me.

"And I thought to myself *why not?*"

Steyn marched to the chair of the economics department

and asked to join the program. After breezing through the required math tests, she was accepted.

She finished her degrees in economics and piano a semester early and began consulting for a Chicago business firm before earning an MBA from the University of Chicago, fully intending to forge a career in finance on Wall Street.

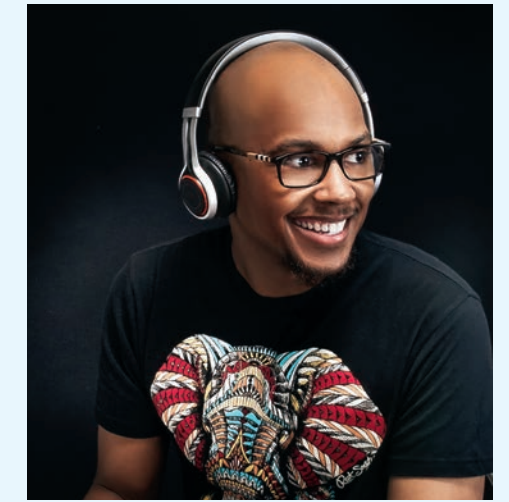
"I was also sure that I only wanted to work for one firm—Goldman Sachs, thanks to a lot of movie watching, I am sure," Steyn jokes, recalling her days with the once-beleaguered investment company. "I got my wish, and I have to say *always be careful what you wish for*, because it

might happen."

Steyn now works for General Motors as VP of urban mobility and Maven, where she's helping pioneer a car-sharing service that she says could help the auto industry adapt to changing market forces.

Though she only plays piano for fun now, Steyn credits music with helping to develop her business acumen.

"In a way, music is pattern recognition," she explains. "So when you come to a problem in business that's undefined, that's where it really helps. I need the puzzle pieces to come together in my head. All of these things are transferable to whatever profession you choose."



Hi-Hats & Hard Hats

NAME: **Edward Kennedy Ellington Scott '15**
JOB: **Acoustics Consultant and Percussionist**
MAJORS: **Jazz Studies and Physics**

"The original plan was to be a mechanical engineer," says Edward Kennedy Ellington Scott. "But when I got to Oberlin and saw all the music, I ended up doing a change of status."

Scott switched his major to physics and added jazz studies during his second year. During winter term of 2014, he interned with Akustiks, the noted architectural acoustics consulting firm, to get a taste of what the job was like. It turned out to be a good fit.

"This job is the perfect mix between art and science, and I still get to be around music," he says. The consulting business requires a lot of travel, but he takes his drumsticks everywhere to keep in practice, and he still gigs on occasion.

The job consists first of drafting and drawing up specifications for builders. When construction on the hall nears completion, the consultants drop in for a "hard-hat concert," during which they help the musicians learn how to play in the new space.

"As the orchestra plays, we'll tweak some of the adjustable acoustics like the curtains, the angle and height of the ceiling panels, the angle of the orchestra shell, and so on," Scott explains.

That's where his training as a musician comes into play.

"I've gone to one hard-hat concert myself: Gaillard Center in Charleston, which opened in 2015. I actually conducted a bit—I was scared out of my mind. My boss said, 'Just wing it, man!' He usually does the conducting, but he wanted to walk around the hall to feel it out."

Scott's been at Akustiks for three years now, and he departs in the fall to begin studying for a PhD in architectural acoustics at the renowned Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.



SUI SICONG, TANVA ROSEN-JONES '97

LIANS JADAN, BETH MADISON

Double Degree by the Numbers

Oberlin was the first institution to implement a program that conferred two degrees concurrently. Beginning in 1910, students could earn a bachelor of arts and a bachelor of music in a span of six years. By 1920, those degrees became attainable in five years. And these days, many students complete their double degree in as few as four years. Oberlin's Double Degree Program has matured over the years, and its value has never been greater—in fact, double-degree students graduate with higher GPAs than students pursuing degrees in only the college or conservatory.

3 out of 10

conservatory students also pursue degrees in the college. That's about 40 new double-degree students in each incoming class.

8.5%

of students admitted into the conservatory later add a double degree in the college.

70%

of students who enter as double degree ultimately complete both degrees.

20%

increase over the last decade in students who entered as double degree and finished both degrees.

25%

of double-degree students complete both degrees in 4 years. An additional 12 percent finish in 4.5 years, and virtually all finish within 5 years.

50

number of admitted students in the Class of 2022 who are pursuing double degrees—among the most in Oberlin history.

The Piano (and Math) Man

NAME: Tony Weinstein '02
JOB: Teacher and Accompanist
MAJORS: Piano and Math

Tony Weinstein's family immigrated to the U.S. from Ukraine when he was 14. He comes from a long line of musicians and music teachers, and he recalls that the Double Degree Program is what drew him to Oberlin in the first place.

"By about my junior year of high school, I knew that this was going to be what I wanted to do," Weinstein says of his life at the keyboard. "But I grew up kind of as an academic wunderkind, and I knew I'd want to do a second major. I felt the program at Oberlin would be the easiest way to make that happen."

Weinstein studied math in the college and piano in the conservatory. Although he considered finishing both degrees in four years, he met his future wife, Karina Avanesian '03, during his sophomore year and decided to spend an extra year with her on campus while practicing for graduate school auditions.

He earned a master's degree and doctorate in piano performance from Indiana University, and he teaches and is a staff accompanist at DePauw University. Though he doesn't use his math degree in a direct way, Weinstein says the abstract thinking and pattern recognition that he learned as an algebraist helps him musically.

"I get asked what the connection is fairly often," he says with a laugh. "But I don't really have a good answer other than you bang your head against the wall a lot until things make sense in both fields."



BLAKE CROSBY, BRIAN BESSENAIRE



The Jazz Doc Is In

NAME: Calvin Barnes '02 JOB: Radiologist and Saxophonist MAJORS: Biochemistry and Jazz Studies

Calvin Barnes has been called the Jazz Doctor of Savannah. A mild-mannered radiologist by day, he breaks out his saxophone at night and performs with combos and big bands in clubs around the city.

Barnes wakes up at around 4:30 every morning to practice before starting work for the day. He loves being a musician, and he loves being a doctor.

"As a radiologist, I'm not involved that much in direct patient care for the most part, but I do a lot of pain injections," he says. "Music helps to break the ice with a patient I might only see one time. Having the vocabulary to talk with just about

anyone who walks through the door is really helpful." On the flip side, Barnes says that the discipline of being in medicine helps keep his practice sessions grounded and productive, especially working on those keys and patterns that might not be the most comfortable to review at 5 a.m.

"I chose Oberlin specifically for the Double Degree Program, and honestly I thought it was harder than med school," Barnes says. "I was one of the few hard science double-degree students, but professors and staff worked with me to make sure I could get to all my rehearsals and labs."

After Oberlin, Barnes

attended the Yale School of Medicine, popping down to New York City for studio recording sessions on weekends, before completing a residency in St. Louis and a fellowship at Duke. He moved to Georgia to be closer to family. It's there that he experienced a "musical revolution," as he puts it, finding the inspiration to perform regularly.

"Life is what you make it, and you have to be willing to be unique, which is hard to do," Barnes says. "Our culture wants to categorize people, and you have to be OK with being outside of a category. Sometimes that's where you find your happiness."



Correspondent's Course

NAME: Sophia Yan '09 JOB: Television Reporter
MAJORS: Piano and English Literature

An editor at *Time* magazine once told intern Sophia Yan that if she had the guts to get up on stage and play the piano in front of everyone, she had the guts to go up to people and ask them how they think.

(That editor was Michael Duffy '80, whose wife, Demetra Lambros '82, had studied piano and English. Obies everywhere!)

Since those days, Yan has reported for Bloomberg, CNN, and CNBC International. When we spoke with the East Coast native in May, she was on assignment in Hawaii, reporting on the volcanic eruptions there.

"I've covered earthquakes in Taiwan, the making of Obamacare, major violent protests ... oh—my first story was covering President Obama's first inauguration," Yan says. "And now a volcano. Things stay interesting!"

Yan entered the conservatory as a pianist and applied to the college during her first year. She says she wouldn't have become a journalist if it hadn't been for Oberlin. "The small class sizes really opened my mind, and I started cultivating a real love for learning," says Yan, who wrote for the *Oberlin Review* throughout her years on campus.

She embraces the challenge of reporting stories that fall outside of her immediate realm of expertise—and she used to call her former economics professor for advice on recommended reading as she delved into business reporting early on in her career.

"Mostly, I cover international affairs," she says. "Most of my stories have been based out of and on Asia. I do food and travel stories every now and then. I always joke that I could order a lavish meal at any restaurant in the world."



CREATING
CONNECTIONS

NEW
APPROACHES
TO LEARNING
JOIN THE
COLLEGE
AND
CONSERVATORY
LIKE NEVER
BEFORE.

BY
KATHRYN METZ

T

TEACHING THEORIES COME IN AND out of style, touted by everyone from curriculum designers to education psychologists as the next best thing for this or that generation of learners. Unlike other approaches to education, the idea of connected learning is not a theory or even a method; it is the fundamental understanding that people, regardless of age, learn more—more deeply and more thoughtfully—within an ecology of interests and with reinforcement through a sense of meaningful purpose, peer support, and a challenging learning environment.

This ecology allows students to build connections across a spectrum of settings, from the classroom to the concert hall to the sports arena to the local, regional, national, and international community. Ultimately, connected learning better prepares students to be global citizens.

At Oberlin College and Conservatory, connected learning lies at the heart of our educational mission. The idea that musical excellence represents half of the equation reflects the core principles of connected learning: transformation and inclusivity. The conservatory cannot function independently of the college and vice versa: Students, faculty, and staff depend on access to new and challenging opportunities that are

both academic and artistic.

Already, this emphasis can be seen in numerous ways:

- The Oberlin Center for Convergence, known as StudiOC, is a modern and flexible educational space that was christened in 2017 as the literal home base for multidisciplinary collaboration on campus.
- Both the college and conservatory offer diverse programming centered around music and connected to the professional world.
- There are more opportunities than ever for college students to make the conservatory their own, including expanded course offerings and access to instruments and other resources.
- New funding through an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant supports teaching faculty to develop programming that actively incorporates music across the existing curriculum. It also connects faculty and students to Oberlin's seemingly endless resources for multidisciplinary study, from world-class jazz archives to a far-reaching network of international performing artists.
- For generations, Oberlin students have undertaken immersive, life-changing experiences through study-abroad and winter-term programs. Now more than ever, these experiences play a vital role in helping students forge a holistic understanding of where their professional passions lie.

Of course, Oberlin is not unique in its quest to connect learning through and beyond the curriculum.

"All schools require students to push their own boundaries," says Selch Associate Professor of Musicology James O'Leary. "The advantage we have is that Oberlin demands and inspires students to

creatively engage with the world. What Oberlin prides itself on is having students push other people's boundaries in the world—we make it part of our curriculum. Oberlin offers an unusual opportunity, having a world-class conservatory with a world-class liberal arts college. Connected learning informs what they're doing not just in the practice room, but how they position themselves in the world."

O'Leary himself is one of the campus' ardent practitioners of connected learning: In spring 2018, he teamed up with faculty from the history and opera theater departments to offer an integrated program—called a "learning community"—through StudiOC that connected Weimar-era Germany with New York's Broadway scene and avant-garde theater. Participating students took part in three courses that approached the topic from the perspective of each discipline. The experience culminated in a production of Kurt Weill's musical *The Seven Deadly Sins*, mounted by students from the classes.

Connected learning is a promising model that addresses the critical challenges facing this generation of undergraduates. Faculty build connections between departments and across campus, and students engage within the classroom and beyond, exploring meaningful interaction with people representing a wide variety of identities, ideologies, cultures, and perspectives. This instills in students a deeper understanding of the ways in which knowledge is created and the world is understood, forging a pathway between their college years and fulfilling personal and professional lives.

Kathryn Metz is an assistant professor of ethnomusicology. She focuses on expanding the study of music across the liberal arts.



A scene from *Awkward Moments III*, Mimi Xu's multimedia installation at the Birenbaum.

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF CONNECTED LEARNING

THE CLUSTER EFFECT

StudiOC's learning communities offer up to three courses taught around the same topic. "We wanted to find a way to make the college and the con speak to each other at the same moment and in the same person," says musicology professor James O'Leary, who taught a spring semester StudiOC class that explored connections between German operas and Broadway musicals in the first half of the 20th century. It was part of a cluster called From Berlin

to Broadway: The Music of Kurt Weill, which also included history professor Ari Sammartino's related class on Weimar Berlin and opera theater professor Jonathon Field's course Avant-Garde Performance Practice in Opera & Musical Theater. The semester concluded with a student performance of Weill's *The Seven Deadly Sins* in the Birenbaum, Oberlin's new interdisciplinary learning and performance space.

The year began with a fall semester learning-community cluster titled Arts and the Overlooked, led by music education professor Jody Kerchner and German professor Elizabeth Hamilton. It addressed justice, access, and the power of the arts to transcend and transform the walls that divide us. Kerchner's course, Arts Behind Bars, examined models of art programs offered for the incarcerated, while Hamilton's course examined conceptual and historical models of disability.

Three additional clusters incorporating music will be offered in fall 2018: Art of Conflict Resolution, Arts of Desire, and Science of Aesthetic Experience.

ART MEETS SCIENCE

In November, famed acoustician Albert Xu and his daughter, multidisciplinary performance artist Mimi Xu, held a wide-ranging residency presented by StudiOC that explored fascinating intersections between art and science. Head of the Paris-based firm Xu Acoustique, Albert Xu devoted a lecture to his research on some of the world's most important performance venues.

Daughter Mimi Xu has become one of the most sought-after music directors for a global fashion clientele, including Versace and Prada. Her enterprise incorporates her parallel interests in sound design, composition of original music for film soundtracks and designer

campaigns, multimedia performance art, and her work as a professional DJ under the alias Misty Rabbit. At Oberlin, she teamed up with students from studio art, cinema studies, dance, and TIMARA for an installation at the Birenbaum called *Awkward Moments III*, which explored the biological life cycle using music as a point of departure. "I've rarely experienced an educational environment that nurtures and gives so much support to students' personal, intellectual, and creative expressions," Mimi Xu said at the end of the week. (View more at awkwardmoments.space/series-iii.)

BLURRED LEGALITY

In February, StudiOC's "Whose Music Is It Anyway?" panel discussion probed issues involving repurposing of music and copyright laws—a theme that resonates with professionals, amateurs, and fans alike in this increasingly complicated digital age. Guests included entertainment lawyer Kenneth Freundlich, author of the amicus brief for the famed 2015 case against Robin Thicke, in which the pop star was accused of plagiarizing a Marvin Gaye song in his hit "Blurred Lines." Also joining the panel were NPR music critic Ann Powers and professor Jason King of the Clive Davis Institute for Recorded Music at New York University. Open to the public, the program was attended by students from classes in art, entrepreneurship, music criticism, and professional development for musicians, among others.

SOUND STRATEGIES

For generations, Oberlin has emphasized integrating resources from the renowned Allen Memorial Art Museum into the college curriculum. In a similar way, a February workshop for college faculty illuminated ways in which the conservatory can be utilized to

integrate music into classes and to accommodate more inclusive teaching practices and different learning styles.

"If the lessons learned can apply in literally any liberal arts setting, it wasn't hard to understand why the appeal of using music across the curriculum seemed particularly opportune for Oberlin," history professor Steven Volk recounted, noting the conservatory's unparalleled wealth of resources, from its vast collections of recordings and instruments to its extensive schedule of live performances and its teachers' approaches to musical thinking.

GETTING AWAY

Every year at Oberlin, some 300 students devote a semester—or an entire academic year—to studying abroad, in addition to immersive winter-term projects in at least three of their years at Oberlin. These represent two ways in which connected learning has long been a part of the curriculum.

"When we start to look at study abroad and connected learning, the links are undeniable," says Jessica Greenfield, director of Oberlin's Cooper International Learning Center, Study Away, and Winter Term. "On one hand, we have students who seek out programs that are specific to their field of study, and they experience a double immersion—in their academic field and in a new culture. On the other hand, we have students who seek out a completely new culture and a program that has nothing to do with their major, which allows them to use the skills they've gained at Oberlin to navigate and connect with that new culture. A liberal arts preparation helps students build creative problem-solving skills, critical thinking skills, and an arsenal of tools to confront and thrive in new and challenging situations." For more about winter term, see page 38. ■

PREVIOUS SPREAD: KETH NEGLY; THIS PAGE: YEHEN GULENNO

BONE DEEP WITH DU YUN



MAKING DU

Du Yun returned to Oberlin for a student production of *Angel's Bone*, a post-show talk, and camera time with her collaborator, librettist Royce Vavrek.

THE CELEBRATED COMPOSER RETURNS FOR *ANGEL'S BONE*, THE OPERA THAT EARNED HER A PULITZER. BY ERICH BURNETT

"WHEN I WAS 30, I WENT SKYDIVING WITHOUT telling anybody," Du Yun '01 says, deftly unearthing a new tangent in a conversation already littered with them. "While I was skydiving, I remember thinking *This is not my happiest moment.*"

She enjoyed the experience, she quickly clarifies. "But it was not my *awesomest* moment."

The topic has turned to skydiving because the 41-year-old Chinese American composer was asked about what likely *would be* the awesomest moment for most folks who experience it: winning a Pulitzer Prize, as Du Yun did in April 2017 for her wondrously unsettling opera *Angel's Bone*, an exploration of the psychological effects of human trafficking. The honor vaulted Du Yun into an exclusive group of Oberlin Conservatory Pulitzer winners that also includes composers George Walker '41 and Christopher Rouse '71. (The accolades have kept coming in 2018: Du Yun added a Guggenheim Fellowship to her résumé in April.) She remembers her Pulitzer moment—a phone call she initially assumed was a prank—as a joyful one, but also one freighted with new expectations.

"When people ask you, 'What are your happiest moments in your life?' for me, I always

know my happiest moment because when you experience it, you go *Whoa—this is a happy moment and I'm always going to remember it.* A happy moment is sort of like ... you actually want something and you got it. And then you feel like *Yes! A good thing happened.*

"With a Pulitzer, it's not like they announce a semifinal and a final. They just announce it out of nowhere. I was in Abu Dhabi, and I was shocked. And then there was a bunch of interviews. What happened was almost 24 hours of nonstop media talking because of the time difference. So I didn't really have the time to just be happy about it. You're trying to grapple with the substantialness of it ... but you want to seize the moment and say the things you want to say."

In Abu Dhabi for a cultural summit, Du Yun did seize the moment, in those endless interviews and on social media. "To win the award with this piece means so much for me," she shared on Facebook. "Let's keep being part of the dialogue. Let art be that poetic space where we can initiate such conversations."

As for the substantialness of it all? For starters, there is the fact that Du Yun and the other two finalists for the prize—Kate Soper and fellow

“WHEN WE ARE TALKING ABOUT WOMEN ARTISTS, AT THE CORE OF THAT TOPIC TO ME IS NOT ONLY THAT WE WANT TO CHAMPION WOMEN...WE WANT TO HEAR *OTHER VOICES*.”

Oberlin alumna Ashley Fure '05—were all women, a first in the history of the award.

“When we are talking about women artists, at the core of that topic to me is not only that we want to champion women or not only because we want to champion someone who has been underrepresented. I think it’s because we want to hear *other voices*,” she says.

There is also the matter of *Angel’s Bone’s* significance in sparking conversations about trafficking and slavery.

“I’m not saying that every work of art needs to address a social problem, because that would be so contrived, and that’s not going to solve any problems. But I think there is a lot of difference between political art and a work that can engage social topics.

“When you think about a composer, we have so much freedom. We’re the people who say, ‘We have some thoughts, and we want to share them. This is important enough that you need to stop what you’re doing and see it and hear it

and be here.’ That’s a power thing. Art has that kind of power, and it’s our responsibility to understand what that power means and what kind of agency that power allows us.”

Du Yun talks as if she’s still growing into the role of voice for her artistic generation. During a December 2017 phone conversation, her default setting is somewhere between ebullient and self-deprecating. So while she shows no reluctance to taking on weightier subjects, she has a tendency to drop in irreverent asides that dissipate any excess heft in the air. She is brilliant and driven, and she’s also tons of fun.

Though she has lived her adult years in New York City, Du Yun was born in Shanghai to factory-worker parents who did not attend college—much less three of them, as Du Yun did, earning degrees from Oberlin, Yale, and Harvard. Her early training happened on a piano bought with gold bars that had been secreted away by her grandmother during China’s Cultural Revolution. (To this day, she is visited by dreams of the grandmother she never knew but who set the course for her life and career.)

Du Yun attended the Shanghai Conservatory, where since age 11 she was friends with Huang Ruo, another talented young composer who went on to graduate from Oberlin in 2000. (Both were students of Oberlin composition professor Randolph Coleman, a specialist in postmodernism.) She discovered Oberlin for herself by perusing a catalog of American colleges at her local library. She had been to—and loved—New York, but she sought a very different experience for her studies.

“I’m a big-city girl, so this to me is exotic and kind of amazing,” she says of Oberlin, recalling her original love affair with the place. “I’m like ‘Oh my God—a *field!* Oh my God—*corn!*’”

It was, for Du Yun, the perfect place to develop her craft without big-city distractions. By day, she devoured opportunities to study art and dance and music of all kinds. By night, she would compose in the practice rooms of Robertson Hall, occasionally ducking under the piano to evade security around closing time. By early morning, she would savor the walks back to her dorm, the smells of freshly fallen snow and of blossoms in springtime registering vividly in her consciousness.

Through it all, she learned to be an artist on her own terms.

“Oberlin was always encouraging young students to do different things and to be entrepreneurial before that word got hot,” she says. “I remember that students were always organizing concerts. The first time I saw Erik Satie’s *Vexations* [a single page of music intended to be played 840 times] was at Finney Chapel. So when I heard that the Guggenheim

did it, I was like *You guys are so behind.*”

Before there was *Angel’s Bone*, there was a chameleonic Du Yun, establishing a foothold across various New York cultural scenes. Parts composer, multi-instrumentalist, and performance artist, she creates work informed heavily by classical music new and old, as well as theater, cabaret, punk rock, and more. She has been commissioned by the Seattle and Detroit symphonies, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the International Contemporary Ensemble, and many other institutions, and her music has appeared on stages across Europe, Asia, and the Americas. The *New York Times* called her “an indie pop diva with an avant-garde edge,” and that about covers it.

All of this made Du Yun an easy artistic partner with Royce Vavrek, the Canadian-born librettist and fellow New Yorker who rose to acclaim through collaborations with Missy Mazzoli, Ricky Ian Gordon, and others.

Inspired heavily by independent cinema of the late 20th century, Vavrek was fearless in teaming with Du Yun to explore a subject some might have considered taboo, especially in the raw manner in which *Angel’s Bone* depicts it.

The opera focuses on the plight of two angels who have fallen to earth and are taken in by a husband and wife in the throes of domestic and financial turmoil. At first doted on by the desperate couple, the angels are soon bound by them to a life of slavery. All in the space of one act and 85 frenetic minutes, *Angel’s Bone* illuminates the anguish they feel at every turn and the hopelessness that ultimately envelops them. It premiered as part of New York’s Prototype Festival in January 2016, the culmination of seven years of development and workshoping between Du Yun and Vavrek.

The *Wall Street Journal* called the debut “savagely and uncompromising.” “Appallingly good,” added The *New York*



Du Yun teamed up with *Angel’s Bone* director Christopher Mirto during a pre-production visit in January.



Alexis Reed '19 (right) portrayed Mrs. XE, the conflicted and conniving protagonist of *Angel’s Bone*.

PREVIOUS: JULIE GULENKO '15; OPPOSITE: YEVHEN GULENKO; THIS PAGE: DALE PRESTON '83

Oberlin's iconic Cat in the Cream Coffeehouse became the dystopian home of *Angel's Bone* during winter term 2018.



Times, a reference to *Angel's Bone's* deft blending of horrific themes and its panoply of musical styles.

"Royce is the best collaborator that one could dream to have," says Du Yun. "He writes these beautiful, rich, spectacular words and images, and then he listens to what you want to say and is not afraid of a composer who would be like *Could we change a couple of things?* His text sometimes is just a door to this incredible imagery of his psyche, and that to me is very important. There are writers who are married

to their words, and I think as an opera we are telling a story together. We're exploring the subtlety and complexity of stories, and to me that's very important, because I like exploring too."

Angel's Bone made its way to Oberlin during winter term 2018. It was selected by Assistant Professor of Opera Theater Christopher Mirto in part because of his friendship with Vavrek. The fact it was composed by a talented Oberlin alumna—and a newly minted Pulitzer winner, at that—cemented Mirto's decision to take on

the production, his first at Oberlin and only the second iteration of *Angel's Bone* in its brief but illustrious history. Du Yun visited campus twice: once in January to meet with the cast and crew, and again with Vavrek during the show's sold-out run, for which the iconic Cat in the Cream Coffeehouse was innovatively transformed into a dystopian suburban domicile.

With Oberlin's *Angel's Bone*, Mirto executed a vision that was utterly, sometimes brutally faithful to that of its creators, laying bare the plight of human trafficking's victims and the

YEVHEN GULENKO

motivations of those who perpetrate such crimes. (To wit: There is a scene in which the angels' wings are graphically clipped, others that simulate forced sex on the enslaved cherubs, and a conclusion that calls into question whether the central character's deeds have yielded any sense of remorse.)

Northern Ohio provides an apt setting for such a tale. With its labyrinth of interstate highways, mix of rural towns and urban centers, and its considerable immigrant and transient population, the region is an unintended hub of human

“THERE’S NO FAILURE IN OBERLIN. NO ONE WAS GOING *OH MY GOD, YOU DID A BAD THING*. LATER, WHEN YOU GO INTO YOUR PROFESSIONAL CAREER, YOU HAVE THAT KIND OF FEELING THAT YOU CAN DO ANYTHING.”

trafficking that ensnares children and adults alike. Each of *Angel's Bone's* five performances was followed by a talkback session that encouraged discussion. Among the participants were trafficking scholars and representatives from social service agencies, as well as members of the cast, crew, and production team—including Du Yun and Vavrek on closing night.

"The piece is difficult," Vavrek says in an interview with Du Yun filmed in the Cat. "It's complex. What this [Oberlin production] does is it sort of opens up the doors to conservatories and proves that it can be done by students. I hope this is done by every conservatory in the entire world."

"And not just that," Du Yun interjects, "but also for *professional* productions. Now the argument would be: Oberlin kids are doing it, so you'd better get your game on."

"It's challenging for students in completely different ways than repertory opera is," Mirto said of *Angel's Bone* during fall semester, when the opera was cast. "We talked a lot about how to keep their experience really positive, but also to be challenging. They have very little to go on. When I tell my students that they will be only the second cast ever to play these roles, they get scared and excited at the same time."

Put another way: It's yet another calculated risk at Oberlin—the kind Du Yun grew comfortable with as a student.

"Oberlin taught me about this idea of knowing the *otherness*—looking at others from another perspective," she says. "There's no failure in

Oberlin. No one was going *Oh my God, you did a bad thing*.

"Later, when you go into your professional career, you have that kind of feeling that you can do anything—that anything is possible if you're doing it with people you like. I think that is the genesis of what happens when you talk about *scenes*, when you talk about movements in different cities. You have a group of people with the same convictions and the same ideas and the same goals coming together and making that synergy happen. Oberlin has that, and that's something wonderful for me to tell people."

Du Yun's winter visits to campus, and her interaction with students and faculty during that time, have provided her with a new perspective on her alma mater.

"I think I finally understand the idea of homecoming," she says.

"When I was a student here, I would look at artists coming in who actually shifted my understanding of what art is. Just to know that I can be one of those people? To say I'm honored is underrepresentative of my emotions."

Sensing that the conversation is winding down, Du Yun gathers herself for one final line she can't keep to herself any longer.

"... And I wanted to end with: Thank you, Oberlin."

With that, a wide grin settles across her face as she turns to her collaborator.

"See, I'm a composer," she declares to Vavrek with a satisfied sweep of her arms. "I know how to close." ■

Wintry Mix

Oberlin students explore a world of experiences during winter term.

January at Oberlin has little in common with January in Oberlin. The reason is winter term, the month-long period between fall and spring semester when students immerse themselves in an endless array of learning experiences in locales far and wide—and sometimes even on campus. As Oberlin celebrates the 50th anniversary of winter term in 2019, we look back on a few of the ways conservatory students took part in January 2018.



For a third consecutive year, Oberlin students taught and performed jazz and classical music as artists in residence at Kings Academy in Amman, Jordan. The cultural exchange, coordinated by Associate Dean for Academic Support Chris Jenkins and sponsored by the U.S. Embassy, included concerts in a newly created theater at the American Community School in Amman and at a club in Al Weibdeh.

Every January since 1991, Oberlin students have visited Panama to work with young musicians. In 2018, the Oberlin-Panama Project was led for the first time by Associate Professor of Community Engagement Louise Zeitlin. Students coached the youth orchestra, known as Panamá Campamento Musical Juvenil, on music by Schumann and Borodin.



Ten students—some with classical backgrounds, others steeped in jazz—learned from master musicians in Rio de Janeiro as an extension of Oberlin's Performance & Improvisation (PI) curriculum. Coordinated by professors Jay Ashby and Jamey Haddad, their studies included taking in local concerts and observing preparations for Carnival. The trip culminated in a concert that featured the Oberlin musicians alongside their new Brazilian friends.



At the annual winter-term Bach Institute in Boston, students were coached for a week by musicians from the Emmanuel Music collective. They then devoted a second week to outreach concerts around the city, under the guidance of voice professor Kendra Colton '83.



Piper Hill '20, a double-degree student in TIMARA and math, and computer science major William Tokunaga '20 (pictured, left) devoted January to "Taiko, TIMARA, Tokyo," a collaborative project involving traditional taiko drumming. Tokunaga, a member of Oberlin College's taiko ensemble, studied in Japan under the master musicians of the taiko group Amanojaku. Together, Tokunaga and Hill also developed technology that used Nintendo Wii remote controls to shape aspects of the sound emitted by a taiko drum. They shared their work in a February concert on campus. The project was supported by Oberlin XARTS, which fuels multidisciplinary artistic projects.



The student ensemble Quartet Davis pushed the boundaries of chamber music during a nine-concert tour of the Eastern U.S., embedding improvisation into original pieces and arrangements of traditional and contemporary works. The quartet, which

consists of violinists Camie Vogley-Howes '20 and Molly Tucker '18, violist Emily Edelstein '18, and cellist Karl Henry '19, also took part in educational and outreach events. The trip was made possible by a 2018 Flint Initiative Grant.

Trombone professor Lee Allen and collaborative pianist Allie Su led six conservatory students on a mission to Uganda to work with the nonprofit Brass for Africa, dedicated to sharing life skills with children through the teaching of brass instruments.



Two student groups embarked on rehab-and-recital missions in hurricane-ravaged regions of Puerto Rico and Texas. Their efforts continued the mission that began with a September benefit concert at Cleveland's Severance Hall (see page 6). They rebuilt homes, prepared and served food, and lifted spirits through chamber music performances. At the same time, a third group performed outreach concerts in northeast Ohio. All three efforts were coordinated by viola professor Peter Slowik. (View a video of the Houston experience at <http://bit.ly/OberlinWT-Houston>.)

PUERTO RICO: RICARDO AROJUNGO

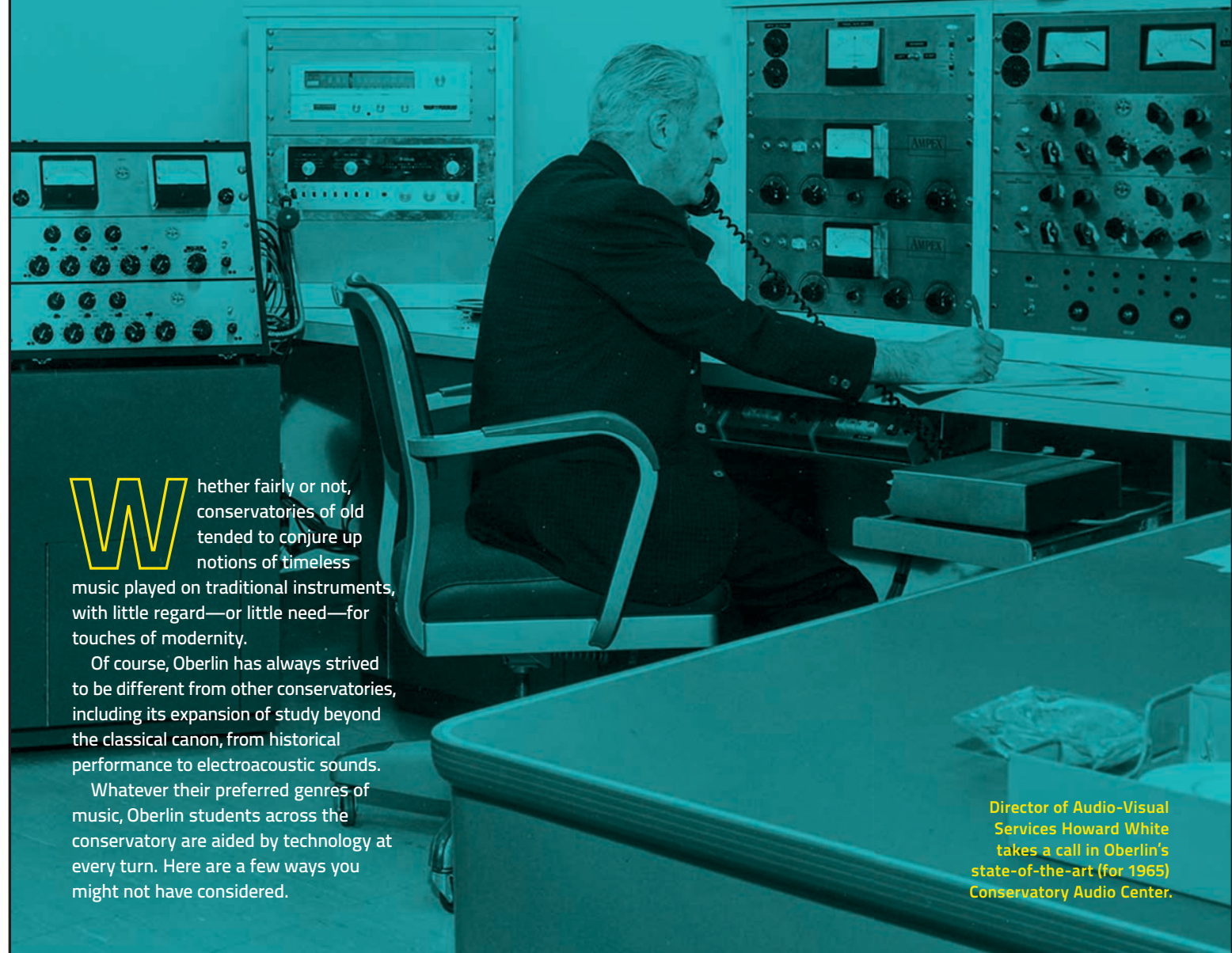
Ethnomusicology professor Jennifer Fraser joined forces with anthropology and geology faculty for a two-week study of cultural responses to natural disasters in Indonesia, where volcanoes, earthquakes, tsunamis, and other events wreak havoc with unfortunate regularity. Eight students investigated the ways in which citizens of the region interpret, understand, and rationalize disasters, as well as how they deal with such hazards.



TECH SUPPORT

8 WAYS TECHNOLOGY MAKES LIFE BETTER AT OBERLIN.

BY ERICH BURNETT



Whether fairly or not, conservatories of old tended to conjure up notions of timeless music played on traditional instruments, with little regard—or little need—for touches of modernity.

Of course, Oberlin has always strived to be different from other conservatories, including its expansion of study beyond the classical canon, from historical performance to electroacoustic sounds.

Whatever their preferred genres of music, Oberlin students across the conservatory are aided by technology at every turn. Here are a few ways you might not have considered.

Director of Audio-Visual Services Howard White takes a call in Oberlin's state-of-the-art (for 1965) Conservatory Audio Center.

COURTESY OBERLIN COLLEGE ARCHIVES

JENNIFER MANNA



LIVE FROM SYDNEY!

Violin professor Milan Vitek came to know his Norwegian counterpart Ole Bøhn very well through years of teaching in Copenhagen and performing throughout Scandinavia. Now Vitek is two decades into his Oberlin career, and Bøhn teaches at the Sydney Conservatorium in Australia. But with the help of Bibbins Hall's Distance Learning Room, they share expertise with each other's students as if they shared the same classroom.

In April 2018, Vitek hosted a master class with Bøhn for Vitek's Oberlin students—one of whom, Jasmine Tan '19, actually hails from Sydney and is a former student of Bøhn's.

Though they were separated by some 9,500 miles, and though one studio was beginning a new day as the other completed the previous one, they interacted with exacting clarity.

Likewise, Vitek uses the Distance Learning Room to lead master classes with students in Sydney as well as in Europe, where he swaps sessions with educator friends across the continent.

"For master classes, to give ideas and to listen to students, it's fantastic," Vitek says of the technology, which includes a Polycom HDX 9000 conferencing system, a Polycom camera, and a Sharp

Aquos 80" LCD display. "It's great to connect with other schools and with other young people. These master classes are very interesting even for me, because there is no end to learning and discovering good ideas that other people have."

Of course, master classes are just one reason conservatory students connect across great distances.

When violist Salam Karahawa '19 began feeling discomfort in his right shoulder, conservatory administrators helped connect him with violinist Pamela Frank and physical therapist Howard Nelson. The husband-and-wife team known as Fit

as a Fiddle uses movement analysis to help musicians work through injuries associated with their playing. Karahawa, a native of Syria, consulted with Frank and Nelson via Skype several times during 2017-18.

Their virtual sessions took place in Stull Recital Hall, where Karahawa was able to project the image of Frank and Nelson on a large screen and demonstrate his playing for them. Though Karahawa had the room to himself, Stull Hall can accommodate approximately 100 people for distance-learning opportunities in addition to hosting live performances.

2

LAY DOWN SOME TRACKS

Oberlin's self-record system is among the most sophisticated—and easiest to use—of any conservatory anywhere.

Students can reserve space for audio and video recording in any of two concert halls, as well as Clonick Hall and Central 25, the main rehearsal space for large ensembles. Classrooms throughout Bibbins Hall also have audio-record capability. "Hundreds of graduate school auditions and summer music festival auditions are recorded in these spaces every year," says Paul Eachus, Oberlin's director of audio services.

Clonick Hall's recording studio, in particular, is equipped with an AJA HELO H.264 video recorder that automatically syncs to audio captured by the room's twin Schoeps MK4 microphones, which feed to a Grace Design Lunatec mic preamplifier. (For those needing to capture only audio, a Denon DN-700R audio recorder is also available.) Classroom units use DPA 4060 microphones with True P2 analog 2-channel preamps and Tascam SS-CDR200 recorders. In other words: They've got you covered.

"Self-recording was really helpful in easing the stress of the grad school application process," says singer Cory McGee '18, who begins graduate work this fall at Rice University. "Having that available allowed me to have as many chances as I needed to get a perfect take, instead of having to spend a lot of money on studio time like many students have to do elsewhere."



3 BETTER SINGING THROUGH SCIENCE

When soprano Theodora Nestorova '18 of Massachusetts began considering music schools, she weighed her interest not only in singing but in teaching voice as well. "I had read a lot of books on the teaching of singing, but I had very little understanding of the science behind it," she says.

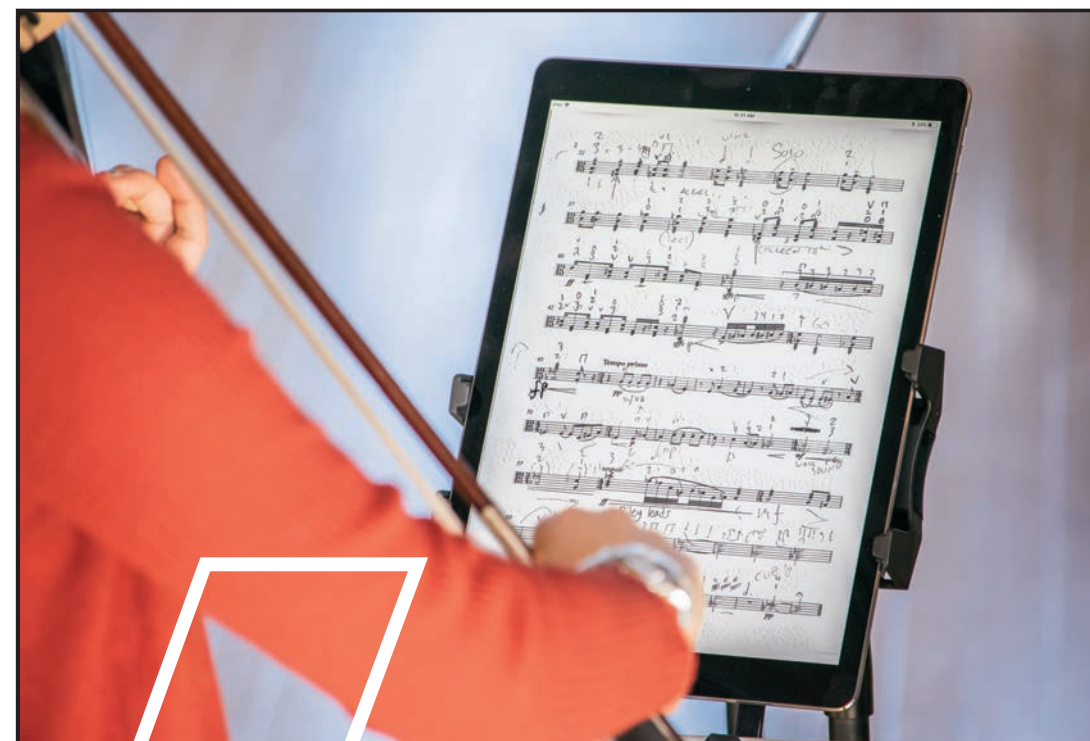
That changed when Nestorova's eventual teacher, Professor Lorraine Manz, introduced her to the Otto B. Schoepfle Vocal Arts Center, an office in the conservatory's Robertson Hall dedicated to examination of the voice from a scientific perspective using spectrographic display. Founded by legendary Oberlin voice teacher Richard Miller and named for a prominent area businessman, the Vocal Arts Center allows students

and their mentors to analyze their singing in real time or to study the singing of premiere artists of the past—an experience that introduces them to the legacy of the greats. Use of the spectrograph provides insight into such facets of phonation as onset and release, vowel definition and modification, agility, nasality, and phrase shaping. In these ways and others, the lab provides a visual affirmation of what we hear.

"It's a great resource for singers who want to know more about what's going on with their voice," says fellow voice major Tayte Mitchell '18 of Alberta, Canada, who worked at the Vocal Arts Center with Nestorova. "This gives you an actual way to look at what's going on. It gives you a blueprint of your voice."

ICONFACTORYTEAM, THE NOUN PROJECT; JULIE GULENKO '15

JULIE GULENKO '15; ANDREY VASILEV & LOKA MARIELLA, THE NOUN PROJECT



A REAL PAGE-TURNER (NO REALLY)

In the fall of 2017, a student quartet piloted a new initiative to incorporate iPads in the practice room and on the stage—a relatively new phenomenon that has gained more traction among musicians since the advent of Apple's largest-ever iPad Pro in 2015.

The opportunity arose because the ensemble wanted to take on a particularly challenging piece of music to perform: Cuarteto

No. 2 by Peruvian composer Celso Garrido-Lecca.

With its 12.9-inch screen that approximates the size of a single page of sheet music, the iPad can be equipped with ever more sophisticated apps such as forScore, which allows musicians to "turn" pages with the click of a Bluetooth-enabled foot pedal or a quick tap on the screen. The device's available stylus makes it easy to mark up scores, and since each iPad is

backlit, no cumbersome stand lights are required—making them particularly useful in low-light settings.

With support from Oberlin's Center for Information Technology, four iPad Pros with forScore, custom stands, and foot pedals were purchased and shared with the ensemble. In the near future, the conservatory plans to invest in additional iPad Pros that will be available for use by students throughout the conservatory.

"People have performed this work before without iPads, but the numerous and fast page turns were the initial problem the quartet had to figure out," says Professor of Conducting Timothy Weiss. "The iPad solves all of that with the foot pedal. The ease in visual communication—especially with chamber music groups—is also one of the biggest challenges the iPad addressed for this quartet. The students are finding all kinds of subtle advantages while learning parts and performing."

The devices' many useful functions, as well as their slimmer profile, also enabled the musicians to more freely interact with each other—and their audiences.

5

FRONT ROW SEATS, WHEREVER YOU'RE SITTING

There's nothing quite like experiencing music live, but there's also something to be said for sharing that music with those who can't be in the room. Oberlin live streams hundreds of concerts every year, from large ensemble performances such as the Oberlin Orchestra, to junior and senior recitals and faculty engagements. Seven of the conservatory's nine performance spaces are equipped for live streaming, allowing families and friends to take part in the joy of music-making no matter where they are.



DUELING PIANOS? NOT ANYMORE

Central to the success of any piano pedagogy class is the opportunity for individualized instruction. When those classes involve 12 students and a teacher all playing the keyboard simultaneously, that ideal can be significantly challenged.

"In the past, if I wanted to instruct the class, I was hearing the *whole* class," says Associate Professor of Piano Pedagogy Andrea McAlister. "So I was going crazy hearing everyone playing everything in my ear all at the same time."

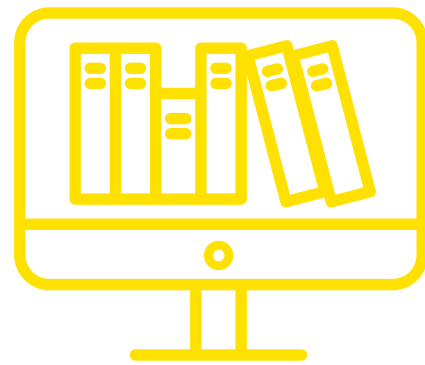
Thanks to a 2014 renovation of Oberlin's piano pedagogy lab, each of 12 Yamaha Clavinova stations is linked to a teacher station—a CVP-605 model—at the front of the room. That way, any student—or *every* student—can hear McAlister through headphones whenever she wants them to, and she can tune in to the playing of any student, or any combination of

students, as she desires.

Each station is outfitted with an iPad Air 2, which allows McAlister to teach from an online textbook. The iPads are also essential for accessing sight-reading apps, assignments uploaded to Oberlin's student portal, samples of music, and more.

McAlister's Clavinova is equipped with a GoPro camera that allows her keyboard to be viewed on a projected screen. She also employs a Yamaha LC4 wireless controller that enables her to move about the room freely as she teaches and to make remote adjustments in how each student communicates.

"If I'm doing classroom work, I can set it up so that the students can hear me talk and they can hear me play through their headsets, but they can only hear themselves play," she says. "If you can hear everyone play, it's just overwhelming."



CHECK OUT OUR LIBRARY

7 Oberlin's Conservatory Library is one of the most expansive music libraries in the U.S., with a collection numbering more than 350,000 items.

Add to that the Conservatory Library's Special Collections, which include everything from a comprehensive stockpile of jazz recordings—more than 100,000 in all—to a virtually exhaustive assortment of historical American instruments, and all of it is accessible to Oberlin students and researchers.

But the Conservatory Library's holdings extend far beyond the conservatory walls. The Oberlin College Library system is also part of the OhioLINK online catalog, which unites the bibliographic information of 120 academic libraries, making resources from any academic library in the state accessible to our students.

Similarly robust is Oberlin's access to a collection of digital resources also available for student use, including Met Opera on Demand, Medici TV, the Berlin Philharmonic's Digital Concert Hall, the Naxos Music Library, and the Grove, Oxford, and Smithsonian encyclopedias of music.

With such extensive online resources, the library rises to the challenge of being available whenever it's needed.

"If Oberlin students have a million things going on all day and decide to begin their research at midnight—they can!" says Deborah Campana, head of the Conservatory Library.



EXTREME MAKEOVER, TIMARA EDITION

The basement of Bibbins Hall has been a hub of electroacoustic creativity since the early 1970s, when the architects of Oberlin's TIMARA Department began experimenting with Buchla and ARP synthesizers—sometimes to the dismay of teachers upstairs who would call down to complain about the volume.

Though that particular challenge was overcome several decades ago, TIMARA more recently benefited from the largest renovation in its history over the summer of 2017. Among the upgrades are revamped studios and common areas, but also the creation of a maker space (pictured), a gallery dedicated to audiovisual presentations, and an equipment depot

where TIMARA students and others from the conservatory can sign out gear for a wide range of projects.

"If a student is interested and demonstrates that they have the knowledge and expertise to use the equipment, we evaluate requests on a case-by-case basis," says Abby Aresty, TIMARA's technical director.

In the maker space, students create contact microphones and sound-generating circuits, customize various sensors and relays, and much more. And in the common area, four iMacs are equipped with Max/MSP and software such as Logic Pro—all of it available to anyone with a college ID. And so far, no complaints from upstairs.



FOLLOW THE LIEDER

Philip Highfill's love of teaching
extends far beyond the conservatory.

BY ERICH BURNETT | PHOTO BY JENNIFER MANNA

THERE ARE FEW THINGS PHILIP HIGHFILL adores more than the art song repertoire. Just as long as someone else is singing it.

"I have the world's worst voice," Highfill offers in his characteristically warm warble. "I sometimes joke that my voice type is *barely-a-tone*, and that's being generous. I do have an accurate ear, but you would flee the room, tearing your hair out in frustration, if I were to try to sing for you."

If singing has never been Highfill's strong suit, *developing* singers and their accompanists most certainly has. And until he was sidelined in his late 30s by focal dystonia, Highfill was a prodigious talent at the piano as well. Oberlin's professor of vocal accompanying for three decades, Highfill has poured out his profound expertise and immeasurable passion for generations of adoring musicians across the conservatory and beyond.

Now, as he veers toward retirement after one final semester on campus, Highfill admits he's not certain it's the right time to go. But it's at least the right time to find out.

"It's a tough decision, because I really love my students," he says during an afternoon conversation in his first-floor studio in the heart of Bibbins Hall. "Not surprisingly, the older I've gotten, the more I've had to offer as a teacher. I'm probably more effective now than ever, especially in coaching singer-pianist teams, where I can look for creative ways to evaluate problems and articulate solutions tailored to the particular needs, abilities, and personalities of individual students. But I'd rather go out at the top of my game than to hear people start muttering *What's he still doing here?*"

To a young Highfill, a life in performance seemed all but a certainty. He won the Chopin Young Pianists Competition at age 16 and

earned music degrees from Yale and the University of Illinois, where he studied with the legendary accompanist John Wustman. His career path began with Fulbright studies in Vienna. There, he cultivated regular work with the Wiener Singverein and other organizations, and performed in recital with such renowned singers as Wolfgang Holzmair, Cesare Siepi, and Erie Mills. Highfill returned to the states to coach at the San Francisco Opera, a gig that continued the revolving door of elite talent at his side, from Domingo to Pavarotti to Kiri te

**"I'd rather go out
at the top of my
game than to
hear people start
muttering *What's
he still doing here?*"**

Kanawa. "Working at close range in a small room with singers of that caliber, you just never forget that sound," he says. "Of course, all the singers I work with at Oberlin are much, much younger, but having that model to point them towards, in terms of phrasing and diction and legato and all of the fundamentals of singing and communication, has been absolutely invaluable to my teaching."

A specialist in German lieder and French mélodie, Highfill taught at the Tanglewood Music Center, the University of Tennessee, and

Vienna's Hochschule für Musik before settling into a newly created position at Oberlin in 1987. With his arrival came the first formal coursework in collaborative piano in Oberlin history and also a double major in piano performance and vocal accompanying that was the first of its kind anywhere. In his first year alone, Highfill accompanied more than a dozen recital programs with both students and faculty. Soon after, dystonia flared up in his right hand, severely hampering his facility at the keyboard.

At about the same time, Highfill was approached about the possibility of forming an orchestra that could meet the needs of the many college musicians on campus. He leaped at the opportunity to create the College Community Strings, which eventually became what today is known as the Arts and Sciences Orchestra.

"One of the great things about conducting the Arts and Sciences Orchestra is having such wonderful soloists," he says, reeling off a list that includes Angela Cheng, Timothy LeFebvre, Robert Shannon, and many others. "Everyone knows we have such talented faculty here, and they have been not just willing but eager when I've asked them to collaborate on the concerto repertoire. Working with a top-notch soloist helps lift the level of all the performers, myself included.

"To some extent, conducting has filled the performing void which my hand injury created. Nothing can quite substitute for making the sound yourself, and I do sorely miss playing the great lied repertoire. But through working all these years with such gifted and committed students, I've been able to continue enjoying it vicariously. And I still love it every bit as much as I did when I started out in this field almost 50 years ago." ■

Student Accolades

2018 Oberlin Conservatory honors & awards

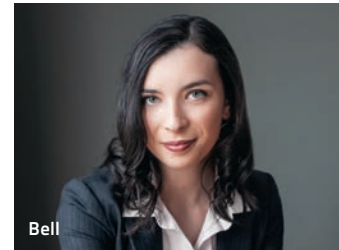
The Walter E. Aschaffenburg Prize
Awarded to a graduating senior for outstanding music composition.

William Bolles-Beaven '18
Composition



The Louis and Marguerite Bloomberg Greenwood Prize
Awarded to graduating students excelling in cello, piano, violin, or voice.

Cory McGee '18
Voice



The Margaret Bos Stambler '84 Professional Development Award
Awarded to outstanding voice majors of great promise to enhance career opportunities.

Elana Bell '18
Voice & Art History



The Arthur Dann Senior Piano Competition
Awarded to the winner of this juried competition for excellence in piano performance.

Rio Xiang PDIP '19
Piano

The Rudolf Serkin Scholarship
Awarded to a student demonstrating excellence in piano performance.

Tianmi Wu '19
Piano



The Faustina Hurlbutt Prize
Awarded to an outstanding graduating student in cello, piano, violin, or voice.

Stephen Joven-Lee '18
Piano

The Theodore Presser Undergraduate Scholarship
Awarded to an outstanding returning double-degree student for excellence in musicianship and liberal arts study.

Andrew Santiago '19
Flute & Physics

The Piano Faculty Prize in Accompanying
Awarded to a graduating senior who has demonstrated excellence in accompanying singers and instrumentalists.

Mai Miyagaki '18
Piano & Sociology

Prudence Poon '18
Piano

The Louis and Annette Kaufman Prize in Violin
Awarded to an outstanding student of violin.

Jerry Xiong '18
Violin & Chemistry

The Avedis Zildjian Conservatory Percussion Award
Awarded to a continuing percussion major in recognition of outstanding performance skills.

Sam Hoffacker '21
Percussion

The Carol Nott Piano Pedagogy Prize
Awarded to an outstanding graduating senior for continued study in piano pedagogy.

Celina Kobetsch '18
Piano & Organ



The Pi Kappa Lambda Prize for Musicianship
Awarded to students judged to be the most outstanding of those elected to Pi Kappa Lambda.

Elana Bell '18
Voice & Art History

Albert Bellefeuille '18, MM '18
Organ & Harpsichord

Zoe Cutler '18
Trombone & Jazz Composition

The Ruth Cogan Memorial Scholarship in Vocal Performance
Awarded to an outstanding voice major who has dedicated significant time to the Otto B. Schoepfle Vocal Arts Center.

Theodora Nestorova '18
Voice

The Newman Civic Fellowship
Awarded to students in recognition of demonstrated investment in finding solutions for challenges facing communities throughout the country.

Zola Barnes '18
Voice & Anthropology

The Earl L. Russell Award in Historical Performance
Awarded to a worthy student majoring in historical performance to assist with the purchase of a musical instrument.

Kelsey Burnham '18
Baroque Flute & Recorder

Peter Lim '19
Recorder & Harpsichord

The James Stamp Award
Awarded for outstanding achievement by a trumpet player.

Alex Pinto '18
Trumpet

The USTA Fellowship in Austria
Awarded by the United States Teaching Assistantship program to American citizens under 30 who have completed a bachelor's degree and have an interest in teaching German or English.

William Bolles-Beaven '18
Composition

The Marilyn Horne Rubin Scholar
Awarded to an outstanding student of voice to support professional development.

Nicholas Music '18
Voice & Computer Science

Elise Thora Volkmann '18
Voice & German Studies



The Selby Harlan Houston Prize
Awarded to a graduating senior whose performance in organ and music theory is of distinguished quality.

Albert Bellefeuille '18, MM '18
Organ & Harpsichord

The James H. Hall Prize in Musicology
Awarded to a graduating senior for excellence in work in musicology.

Ina McCormack '18
Harp & Musicology

The Ernest Hatch Wilkins Memorial Prize
Awarded to a returning student who has demonstrated academic excellence in the three preceding years.

Andrew Santiago '19
Flute & Physics



The Fulbright Scholar Program
Awarded to students for their academic merit and leadership potential with the opportunity to study internationally.

Theodora Nestorova '18
Voice

The Louis Sudler Prize in the Arts
Awarded to a graduating senior in recognition of distinguished achievement in the creative and performing arts.

Prudence Poon '18
Piano

The Wendell and Bettye Logan Prize in Jazz Studies
Awarded to a graduating student who has demonstrated excellence in performance or composition.

Michael Orenstein '17
Jazz Piano & Economics



The Ohio Federation of Music Clubs Agnes Fowler Collegiate Scholarship
Awarded to sophomores or juniors majoring in music and strong in instrumental or voice performance.

Zheyu Jiang '19
Piano

The John Elvin Piano Prize
Awarded to a student judged by the Piano Department to be the most talented in the junior class.

Tianmi Wu '19
Piano



2017-18 Concerto Competition
Awarded annually to senior and artist diploma instrumental students.

Jerry Xiong '18 Violin & Chemistry
Hyeonseo Lee '18 Piano
Yimu Wang '18 Piano
Silvio Guitian '18 Clarinet



2018 DownBeat Student Music Award Winners

Michael Orenstein '17
Jazz Piano & Economics
Best Undergraduate Composition for Small Ensemble

Caleb Smith '19
Jazz Trombone
Best Undergraduate Jazz Soloist

XARTS Grants
Awarded to college and conservatory students to support the development and execution of collaborative, multidisciplinary artistic projects to be implemented during winter term or summer.

Conservatory winners:
Piper Hill '20
TIMARA & Mathematics

Griffin Jennings '18
TIMARA & English

Daniel Markus '20
TIMARA & Biochemistry

Aliya Ultan '19
Cello & Composition

Flint Initiative Grants (FIG)
Awarded to innovative and motivated conservatory and double-degree students to develop imaginative artistic projects.

Emily Edelstein '18
Viola & Ethnomusicology

Karl Henry '18
Cello

Miriam Liske-Doorandish '18
Cello

Molly Tucker '20
Violin & Economics

Aliya Ultan '19
Cello & Composition

Camie Vogley-Howes '20
Jazz Violin

Class Notes

1930s

Late composer, musicologist, playwright, novelist, and political activist **Shirley Graham Du Bois '34, MA '35** was honored with the dedication of a plaque celebrating her contributions to her adopted home nation of Ghana. While still a student at Oberlin, Graham Du Bois created a three-act, 16-scene opera called *Tom-Toms: An Epic of Music and the Negro*, which opened at Cleveland Stadium in 1932, drawing a crowd of 10,000 for the first performance and 15,000 for the second, including then-Governor of Ohio Newton Baker. Graham Du Bois was the first African American woman to write and produce an opera with an all-black cast. In 1951 she married writer and activist W.E.B. Du Bois. Ten years later, they renounced their U.S. citizenship and became citizens of Ghana, where Graham Du Bois was the founding director of the Ghana Broadcasting System. Oberlin College President Carmen Twillie Ambar presented the plaque in Ghana in July 2018.

1950s

Broadway legend **John Kander '51** became the ninth composer to win Signature Theatre's Stephen Sondheim Award in March 2018. One month later, he returned to Oberlin for the dedication of the newly built Kander Theater, which replaces the previous Little Theater. In June, he joined forces with author David Thompson and director/choreographer Susan Stroman for a musical adaptation of Henry James' book *The Beast in the Jungle*. In recent years, Kander has also closely collaborated with lyricist



John Kander receives a warm welcome from students in an April 2018 visit to campus.

Greg Pierce '00 on projects including *The Landing* and *Kid Victory*.

Conductor **Bill Venman '53** led the Amherst (Mass.) Ballet Theater Company in an adaptation of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* in June 2017. The orchestra included horn player **Christine Mortensen '85** and keyboardist **Heather Reichgott '01**, as well as violinist **Elaine Holdsworth '66**, an Oberlin College alumna.

1960s

The American Guild of Organists honored organist and teacher **John Ferguson '63** with the 2018 Distinguished Artist Award at its Gala Hymn Festival and reception in April 2018. Ferguson retired from the faculty of St. Olaf College in 2012 after serving on the faculty for 29 years.

In May 2018, composer **David Nisbet Stewart '65's** *Habanera* for cello and piano was released by Trio Casals on the Navona CD *Moto Bello*.

1970s

Birds of Paradise by **Robert Sirota '71** was featured on a Manhattan School of Music faculty recital presented by flutist Linda Chesis in March 2018. Inspired by video footage of actual birds-of-paradise taken in New Guinea by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the recital, titled "For the Birds," paired avian-inspired music with wildlife audio recordings and video footage.

After 31 years as associate artistic administrator and director of the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program at the Metropolitan Opera, **Lenore Rosenberg '74**

(pictured, middle) retired from the Met in June 2017. She was honored with her name on the tribute wall at the headquarters of Opera America in September. **Bill Palant '91** (third from left), founder and managing director of Étude Arts LLC, was in attendance at the ceremony.

Mary Lou Spinner Lydecker '74 has released *Strings of Hope*, the 12th CD in her Sounds of Hope Project, a nonprofit music and community outreach program she founded in 2004. Its mission is to bring comfort and support through recorded music to those in need of healing by utilizing the donated talents of local musicians and some of Lydecker's Oberlin classmates. The latest recording features harp, classical guitar, violin, and an Irish fiddle group. Learn more at soundsofhopeproject.org.



John Ferguson

Marty Lydecker MME '75 was inducted into the Ohio Band Directors Hall of Fame at the 45th Ohio Band Directors Conference, hosted by the University of Akron in 2016. Lydecker was a band director for 35 years, serving 24 of them at North Royalton High School, where his band marched in the 2003 Tournament of Roses Parade, in an Indianapolis 500 parade, at a BCS National Championship Game, and in Disney World's Main Street Electrical Parade. His legacy lives on in the 14 former students and two former student teachers who are currently Ohio band directors.

1980s

Conductor **Randall Fleischer '81** made his Broadway debut in spring 2018 with a six-week run of *Rocktopia*, the multimedia show he co-created and arranged that fuses iconic 20th-century rock with some of the greatest classical compositions ever written. Its roster of artists includes singer **Alyson Cambridge '02**, a chorus of 40, a full orchestra, and a five-piece rock band. Fleischer is also music director of the Hudson Valley Philharmonic, the Anchorage Symphony, and the Youngstown Symphony.



Lenore Rosenberg

Conductor **Robert Spano '84** will step down as music director of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra in 2021, at the conclusion of his 20th season. During Spano's tenure to date, the orchestra has won six Grammy Awards, performed 49 world premieres, commissioned 28 works, and co-commissioned an additional 13.

Baroque violinist and violist **Risa Browder '85** and cellist and viola da gamba player **John Moran '85** were named the 2018 recipients of Early Music America's Thomas Binkley Award for "outstanding achievement in performance and scholarship by the director of a university or college early music ensemble." Browder and Moran are the founding co-directors of the critically acclaimed Baltimore Baroque Band at the Peabody Institute, where both of them teach.

1990s

Matthew Loden '90 was named CEO of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in April 2018. He most recently served as executive VP for institutional advancement of the Philadelphia Orchestra and was its interim co-president since January. A violinist who

graduated from the Eastman School of Music in addition to Oberlin, Loden has regularly performed with orchestras and ensembles around the world, including U.S. performances at the Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, and Carnegie Hall.

Lisa Whitfield '90 was named the Cleveland Institute of Music's talent development officer in fall 2017. Her efforts focus on diversity and inclusion. A lifelong northeast Ohioan, she previously worked for the Lakewood public schools.

Cleveland singer **Joan Ellison '93** recently joined renowned singer-pianist and music revivalist Michael Feinstein in the Judy Garland Carnegie Hall Concert Restoration Project, which involves complete transcriptions of Garland's 1961 appearance at the New York City venue. She hopes to make their work available to orchestras and organizations so that the music can be celebrated in its original form. Ellison is a teacher of popular voice at the Cleveland Institute of Music.

At the close of 2017, **Lorenzo Candelaria '94** was named dean of the School of the Arts at the State University of New York at Purchase. Previously a music



Molly Barth

history professor and senior administrative officer at the University of Texas at El Paso, he brings decades of experience in arts education and advocacy.

Molly Barth '96 was named assistant professor of flute at Vanderbilt University's Blair School of Music, a position previously held by the late **Philip Dikeman '85**. A Grammy Award winner and co-founder of the new music sextet Eighth Blackbird, Barth previously taught at the University of Oregon School of Music and Dance, the University of Richmond, and the University of Chicago. She is also a co-founder of Duo Damiana with guitarist Dieter Hennings and is a core member of the newly formed chamber ensemble the Zohn Collective.

In June 2018, conductor **Michael Christie '96** led Opera Theatre of Saint Louis in the world premiere of *An American Soldier*, a two-act opera by **Huang Ruo '00** and David Henry Hwang. In July 2017, he conducted the Sante Fe Opera premiere of *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*, with **Edward Parks '06** in the lead role. In the coming season, Christie will lead performances of *La Traviata* at Lyric Opera of



Neal Smith

Chicago, Wagner's *Das Rheingold* at Opera de Montréal, *Rigoletto* at Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera, and *The Grapes of Wrath* at Michigan Opera Theatre in Detroit. With the close of the 2017-18 season, Christie concluded his six-year tenure as music director of the Minnesota Opera.

Clarinetist **Peter Hess '96** is a member of Asphalt Orchestra, the Philip Glass Ensemble, Slavic Soul Party!, and Barbez. His work composing and arranging for winds and strings can be heard in the March 2018 documentary *Mainland*, and he appeared on a recently released Barbez recording called *For Those Who Came After: Songs of Resistance from the Spanish Civil War* (Important Records), which also features guest trumpeter Sebastiaan Faber, Oberlin professor of Hispanic studies. Barbez is a rock-tinged chamber ensemble that has performed across the U.S. and Europe in collaboration with experimental theater director, filmmaker, and playwright John Jesurun.

An associate professor of percussion at Berklee College of Music, **Neal Smith '96** has been collaborating with Imani Winds (which includes oboist **Toyin**

Spellman-Diaz '94 and bassoonist **Monica Ellis '95**) on *Passion for Bach and Coltrane*. The concert-length work is inspired by the poetry of A.B. Spellman, which speaks to the musical mastery of J.S. Bach, John Coltrane, and Gonzalo Rubalcaba, as well as religion and mortality.

Oberlin voice alums took part in a Cape Cod production of the Ralph Vaughan Williams opera *Pilgrim's Progress* in fall 2017. **Andrew Nolen MM '97**, **Martha Guth '98**, **Richard K. Pugsley '01** (in the title role), and **Kathryn Leemhuis '05** sang in the featured event of an international symposium on arts and ecumenism commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. It was produced by Gloriæ Dei Cantores and Elements Theatre Company and performed at Church of the Transfiguration.

In spring 2018, baritone **Daniel Okulitch '99** performed the lead role of Ennis in New York City Opera's U.S. premiere of Charles Wuorinen and Annie Proulx's *Brokeback Mountain*. In July, Okulitch headed west to the Sante Fe Opera to sing the role of General Groves in Peter Sellars' new staging of *Doctor Atomic*.



Daniel Okulitch

2000s

Pianist **Spencer Myer '00** opened the 2017-18 season of Acadia University's chamber series in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. A Steinway Artist, Myer was appointed artist-teacher at Boston's Longy School of Music of Bard College in 2016.

Baroque oboist **Debra Nagy '00**, **MM '02** was appointed principal oboe of the Handel and Haydn Society, a period instrument ensemble in Boston.

Flutist **Claire Chase '01** joined the Harvard University Department of Music faculty in July 2017. Co-founder of the International Contemporary Ensemble, a 2012 MacArthur Fellow, and an avid new music performer, Chase will teach cross-disciplinary classes in ensemble performance, cultural production, and collaboration. In December 2017, she presented six hours of music by 20 composers from her "Density 2036" project at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive.

Cleveland arts administrator and freelance double bassist **Matthew Charboneau '02** has been appointed chair of the Center for Music at the Music

Settlement. He will lead the teaching faculty and future direction of the 104-year-old nonprofit's music education programs, including the focus of a new campus under construction. Charboneau earned a master's degree in nonprofit organization from Case Western Reserve University's Weatherhead School of Management.

Mezzo-soprano **Elizabeth DeShong '02** performed the role of Assyrian commander Arsace in the Metropolitan Opera's production of Rossini's *Semiramide* in February and March 2018, marking DeShong's first major role with the Met. The *New York Times*' opening-night review called her voice "agile, even and velvety."

Composer **Adam Schoenberg '02** witnessed the world premiere of his violin concerto *Orchard in Fog* in February 2018. Performed by the San Diego Symphony under conductor Sameer Patel, the work was initially inspired by its violin soloist, Anne Akiko Meyers, who approached Schoenberg with the idea after a previous project together. In a violinchannel.com story, Schoenberg expressed great joy in working with his

OKULITCH: ROB DALY



Elizabeth DeShong

collaborators: "Part of the beauty and vulnerability of this process is that we [composers] learn to relinquish control and truly let go once we put the final bar down." Schoenberg teaches at Occidental College.

César Alvarez '03 has been composing oddball musicals (his term) in New York City for the last 10 years. He recently won a two-year Princeton Arts Fellowship and a Jonathan Larson Award. His show *Futurity*, created with bandmate **Sammy Tunis '02**, won the Lucille Lortel Award for outstanding new musical in 2016. Alvarez is also the founding artistic director of Polyphone, a festival of emerging musicals, now in its fifth season at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia.

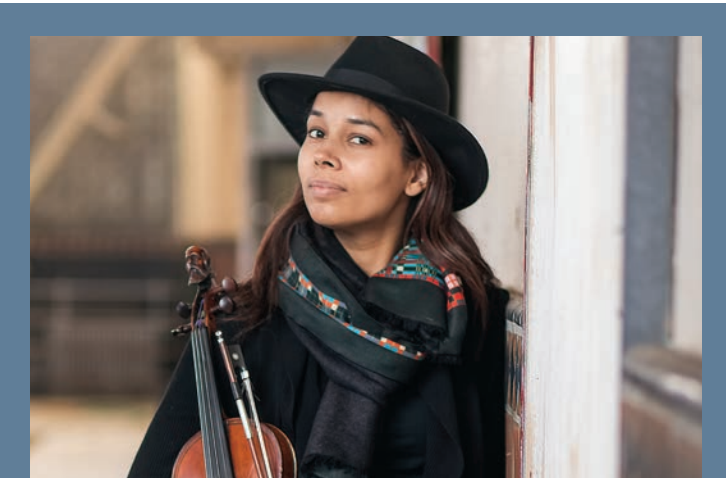
Singer **David Hughey '03** appears in the latest national tour of the Broadway musical *Waitress*. The production began in Cleveland in October 2017, with dates through August 2018.

Bass-baritone **Dashon Burton '05** and tenor **Joshua Blue '16** were featured in the world premiere of Paul Moravec's oratorio *Sanctuary Road* at Carnegie Hall in May 2018 with the Oratorio Society of New

York. The piece is based on the writing of former Underground Railroad leader William Still, who was also the father of Oberlin alumna Caroline Still from the class of 1867.

Two double-degree alumni returned to Oberlin in fall 2017 to join the College of Arts & Sciences faculty: **Jordan Price '05** (cello performance and biology) is an assistant professor of biology, and **Sam Taggart '12** (violin performance and math) is an assistant professor of computer science.

Conductor **Michael Sakir '06** joined Opera Memphis as music director at the start of the 2017-18 season. Along with his administrative duties, Sakir took up the baton for Rossini's *L'Italiana in Algeri* in February and Alessandro Scarlatti's *The Triumph of Honor* in April. He was one of 13 arts administrators selected for Opera America's 2017 Leadership Intensive, a weeklong program that fosters the talents of opera's next generation. Sakir returned to Des Moines Metro Opera to conduct *As One* by Laura Kaminsky as well as the Opera Company of Middlebury (Vt.) for André Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire*. He also made



A Drop of Genius

Versatile musician **Rhiannon Giddens '00** was named a MacArthur Fellow for 2017 by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The so-called "Genius Grant" recognizes the creative contributions and potential of 24 individuals of wildly varying backgrounds, from theater artists to computer scientists. Each recipient is awarded a prize of \$625,000, paid over five years, with no stipulations governing its use.

Giddens was praised by the foundation for "reclaiming African American contributions to folk and country music and bringing to light new connections between music from the past and the present." She is co-founder of the Grammy Award-winning country-blues ensemble Carolina Chocolate Drops, for which she is the lead singer, violinist, and banjo player. A native of North Carolina, she has also released a pair of acclaimed solo albums, *Tomorrow Is My Turn* and *Freedom Highway*, and has collaborated on well-received projects including *Lost on the River: The New Basement Tapes*, a

2014 recording of previously unreleased music by Bob Dylan she made with Elvis Costello, Marcus Mumford, and others.

A former student of Marlene Rosen, Giddens was a standout soprano in Oberlin's Opera Theater program. "Rhiannon is among the best students I have ever had," says Rosen. "She is gifted with a voice of rare beauty that deeply touches those who hear her, and she has the imagination to create musical ideas that are fresh and unerringly honest. She is a highly intelligent woman, but more than that, a person of substance and integrity, respected and loved by her peers."

Giddens joins a long and ever-growing list of Oberlin graduates who have been honored with MacArthur fellowships. Recipients with conservatory backgrounds include pianist Jeremy Denk '90; public radio producer Jad Abumrad '95 of *Radiolab* fame; and flutist/entrepreneur Claire Chase '01, founder of the International Contemporary Ensemble.



We're in This Together!

AS A GRADUATE OF THE DOUBLE DEGREE PROGRAM AT Oberlin, I was afforded a holistic college experience unlike any other in the world. Now I am honored to be the first double-degree graduate to serve as president of the Oberlin Alumni Association.

As the pages of this magazine reveal year after year, Oberlin alumni make their mark in countless ways, in careers both musical and non-musical. We use our combined strengths to bolster our communities, and that effort begins with our attention to current students and recent graduates. Oberlin alumni across the nation and around the globe are eager to support fellow Obies in countless ways, from winter-term housing and internship opportunities to assisting with networking efforts and career placement. (My first job was running a music program in Portugal, thanks to an Oberlin alumnus.) The connections are there, and we thrive on helping each other.

In the past year, the Oberlin Metro New York Artist Community was formed to share expertise, connect with students, boost our alumni, and showcase our successes. The group provides a model for other regions around the country, some with vast Oberlin networks as well as others on the rise.

Last year, financial planner Cristina Briboneria '05 was invited by a conservatory student to conduct a personal finance and business development workshop on campus. Briboneria's visit included discussion of how to track and manage income and expenses, understanding business deductions, dealing with student-loan repayments, avoiding debt, and investing. It's just one of many ways we are dedicated to helping young graduates make successful first steps of their own.

Oberlin's alumni community is vibrant, diverse, and well situated to help students and fellow alumni engage with each other and with their alma mater. Together, we utilize our collective strengths to bolster personal successes and build community.

CAROL LEVINE '84
President, Oberlin Alumni Association



debut with Shreveport Opera (Mozart's *The Magic Flute*) and with the Janiec Opera Company at the Brevard Music Center (Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* and Bernstein's *Candide*).

Four recordings by the historically informed ensemble ACRONYM earned praise in the November 2017 issue of the *Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music*. The albums, titled *Samuel Capricornus*, *Rosenmüller in Exile*, *Oddities and Trifles*, and *Wunderkammer* (all on the Olde Focus Recordings label), explore little-known—or totally unknown—works. ACRONYM's membership includes violinists **Adriane Post '07**, **Edwin Huizinga '06**, **Beth Wenstrom '03**, and **Johanna Novom '07**; viola da gamba and lirone player **Kivie Cahn-Lipman '01**; and cellist **Paul Dwyer '07**.

Brandon Patrick George '08 performed on historical flutes at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art on Fifth Avenue in June 2018. The concert was held in conjunction with the Met exhibitions *Public Parks*, *Private Gardens: Paris to Provence* and *Visitors to Versailles (1682-1789)*.

Graham Johnson '08, a music teacher at Washington Heights Expeditionary Learning School in Manhattan, was awarded the 2017 Presidential Citation by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. The award acknowledges achievement in the nurturing of the arts at a New York City public school. Johnson has taught music and special education in New York since graduating from Oberlin with majors in economics and music. He also plays piano with various jazz groups.

Soprano **Nikoleta Rallis Sydykov '09** and her husband, concert pianist Aza Sydykov, launched two new international music festivals in the fall of 2017: the Eurasia Festival of New York City, intended to showcase music and musicians from Russia, the Baltics, the Caucasus, and Central Asia; and the Wilmington Music Festival in Rallis' hometown of Wilmington, N.C. The Wilmington fest, which offers musical experiences—both performance-based and educational—and promotes cultural diversity in the region, hosted a kickoff gala in October.



2010s

Baritone **Joseph Lattanzi '10** was praised by the *New York Times* for the mellow voice and charisma he brought to his role in Gregory Spears' new opera *Fellow Travelers* (libretto by **Greg Pierce '00**), which made its New York premiere at the 2018 Prototype Festival. The opera is based on the tragic love affair of two gay men in 1950s Washington, D.C.

Oboist **Xiomara Mass '10, AD '12** was appointed second oboe of the St. Louis Symphony in November 2017. She had been performing in the Civic Orchestra of Chicago prior to her move to St. Louis.

The Brooklyn-based quintet earthTone debuted its single and music video "Spirals" in fall 2017 in advance of its larger recording project *Color Melt*. The band includes **Patrick Adams '12** (trumpet), **Nicki Adams '11** (keyboards), **Alexander Cummings '13** (saxophone), **Daniel Stein '11** (bass), and **Mike Mohamed '11** (drums).

The chamber ensemble Voyage Sonique, featuring violinists **Augusta McKay Lodge '12** and **Jeffrey Girtton '15**, was invited to perform on Early Music

America's inaugural Emerging Artists Showcase in May 2018. Girtton completed his master's degree at Juilliard in 2017. That same year, he was selected as an English Concert American Fellow and is a member of New Vintage Baroque in New York City. Lodge was named a 2016 English Concert American Fellow, a 2017 Mercury-Juilliard Fellow, and a Kovner Fellow. She joined Paris-based Les Arts Florissants in its 2018 season. Her album of unaccompanied Baroque violin works, *Beyond Bach and Vivaldi* (Naxos), was released in spring 2018.

Theophilus Chandler '14 received the American Academy of Arts and Letters' Charles Ives Scholarship in March 2018. An Emerging Composer Fellow for Musiqqa and a doctoral student at Rice University, Chandler has received commissions from Les Délices, the United States Air Force Band of the Golden West, and Oberlin faculty Amir Eldan, George Sakakeeny, Alexa Still, and Michael Rosen.

The Syndicate for the New Arts presented a seven-city Rust Belt tour during the summer of 2017. The ensemble includes guitarist **Joshua Rosner '14**, harpist **Caitlin Mehrtens '16**, double bassist **Noelle Marty '17**, and



Two for the Show

Tenors **Andrew Owens '07** (pictured, top) and **Alek Shrader '07** (above) were double cast as Benedict in Seattle Opera's winter 2018 production of Berlioz's *Beatrice and Benedict*. Shrader played opposite his wife, mezzo-soprano Daniela Mack, in the role of Beatrice.

Shrader went on to make his Washington National Opera debut in the title role of Bernstein's *Candide* at the Kennedy Center Opera House in May—a production that also featured Denyce Graves '85. Shrader revisits *Candide* in Santa Fe Opera's 2018 summer festival staging of the same work, part of the company's centennial celebration of Bernstein.

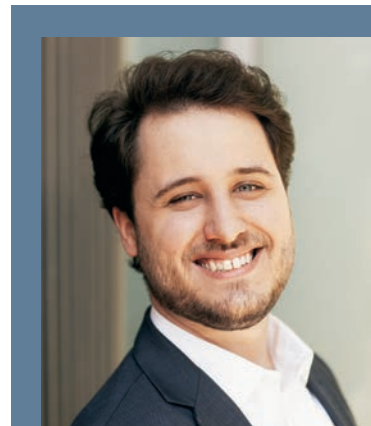
Owens followed his Seattle engagement with a week of performances as Snout in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Theater an der Wien in Austria. He began the year as Conte Almaviva in Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with Greensboro Opera in North Carolina. This summer he takes part in Cincinnati Opera's production of Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. In September he'll play the role of Lucia's bridegroom in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* during Opera Philadelphia's Festival O18 in his hometown.



Kayleigh Decker

percussionists **Justin Gunter AD '15** and **Ben Rempel '15**.

Mezzo-soprano **Kayleigh Decker '15** was named to the Ryan Opera Center ensemble by Lyric Opera of Chicago for the 2018-19 season. A 2017 Young Artist at the Glimmerglass Festival, she has portrayed leading roles in the University of



Cinderella Story

By the time **Carlos Enrique Santelli '14** reached the Finals of the Metropolitan Opera's 2018 National Council Auditions, he mostly had conquered his nerves. "It just felt like a performance," he says. "It wasn't a competition anymore. We were just going on stage at the Metropolitan Opera and playing with the Met Orchestra."

Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music's latest productions of Massenet's *Cendrillon* and Mozart's *Idomeneo*, and she was a district winner in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions in January 2018.

Flutist **Hannah Hammel '15**, clarinetist **Ryan Toher '16**, and



Siena Licht Miller with Robert Spano

oboist **William Welter AD '18** were among 10 musicians selected by the Music Academy of the West to participate in the New York Philharmonic Global Academy Fellowship program in January 2018. For 10 days, participants worked alongside Philharmonic musicians and conductor Stéphane Denève on selections

from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* for Philharmonic subscription concerts. Hammel rounded out her concert season by earning the principal flute position in the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra.

The 2017 Canadian International Organ Competition awarded first prize to **Alcee Chriss '15, MM '15** and third prize to **Nicholas Capozzoli '16, MM '16**. Both are now enrolled in the DMA program at McGill University in Montreal.

Organist **Katelyn Emerson '15** won third prize at the eighth International Organ Competition Musashino-Tokyo in September of 2017. She won first prize in the American Guild of Organists Competition in Organ Performance in 2016. A former student of **James David Christie '75**, Emerson serves as assistant organist and choirmaster at the Church of the Advent in Boston.

Mezzo-soprano **Hannah Hagerty '15** was named a Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist with Washington National Opera for 2018-19. In summer 2018, she will sing the role of Kate Pinkerton in Santa Fe Opera's *Madame Butterfly*. In November 2017, she was a

DECKER: DAVID HOBBY; MILLER: COURTESY ASPEN MUSIC FESTIVAL AND SCHOOL



Theodosia Roussos

Capitol District winner in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

Pianist **Nicholas King AD '15** has completed a master's degree in piano performance at the Juilliard School. He concluded his academic career with a solo piano recital at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall. He has joined the global asset management firm AllianceBernstein as a VP and financial advisor.

Bassoonist **Ben Roidl-Ward '15** has been named one of five recipients of a 2018 Classical Music Fellowship by the Luminarts Cultural Foundation. The fellowship includes a cash prize to support artistic endeavors as well as opportunities for project funding and career development.

Mezzo-soprano **Siena Licht Miller '16** portrayed the title role in Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges* at the 2017 Aspen Music Festival in a production led by festival director **Robert Spano '84**. Miller debuted with Opera Philadelphia in its fall 2017 production of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and performed on the Marilyn Horne Foundation's The Song Continues celebration at Carnegie Hall in January 2018.

ROUSSOS: CRAIG SCHWARTZ; HUANG, KOBETITSCH: JULIE GULENKO '15

Joshua Blue '16 was named a 2018-19 Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist with Washington National Opera. He also took first place in the 2018 Middle Atlantic Regional Metropolitan Opera Council Audition. He recently completed a master's degree at the Juilliard School.

Singer and instrumentalist **Theodosia Roussos AD '16** performed the role of Maria in Bernstein's *West Side Story*, presented by the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music, where she is pursuing a master's in oboe.

Olivia Boen '17 won the 2018 Lynne Cooper Harvey Foundation Scholarship, presented by the Musicians Club of Women of Chicago, which is dedicated to promoting established and promising women in classical music. Boen was also awarded a Beebe Fellowship, which will support a year of advanced music study at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. This summer, she is a Steans Vocal Fellow at the Ravinia Festival.

The Akron performing arts nonprofit Tuesday Musical awarded first prize in its annual scholarship competition to flutist **Aram Mun '17, AD '19** and



Jingning Huang and Celina Kobetitsch

second prize to clarinetist **Colin Roshak '18** in the woodwinds division, and third prize in strings to cellist **David Lee '20**.

Tenor **Santiago Pizarro '17** won the National Classical Singing Competition of Radio Filarmonía in October 2017, mere months after returning to his native Peru upon completing his degree. As part of the award, Pizarro will travel to Italy for master classes with Peruvian tenor Juan Diego Flórez.

Violinist **Mwakudua waNgure '18** was awarded a Taiwan-U.S. Sister Relations Alliance scholarship. Sponsored by the Taiwan Ministry of Education, the award supports studies in Mandarin language and Taiwanese culture at the National Cheng Kung University in Tainan City.

During his last semester in Oberlin's artist diploma program, oboist **William Welter AD '18** performed with the New York Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, and the Chicago Symphony. In June 2018, Welter was appointed to the position of principal oboe with the Chicago Symphony.

Voices of Canton awarded prizes to Oberlin singers **Kyle Miller '19**

and **Nicholas Music '18** (VOCI Scholarships), **Seyquan Mack '21** (Loren C. Veigel Scholarship), **Katherine Krebs '19** (Stover Family Scholarship), and **Caitlin Aloia '21** (Stephen M. Dannemiller Scholarship).

Matthew Bickett '19 was awarded first prize at the American Guild of Organists' Great Lakes Regional Competition for Young Organists in July 2017. (**Mitchell Miller '17** earned second prize.) Bickett was invited to perform at the 2018 American Guild of Organists convention in Kansas City.

Pianists **Celina Kobetitsch '18** and **Jingning Huang '19** created Concerts for Good, the culmination of their philanthropic vision and their experiences in Oberlin's Intro to Entrepreneurship class and the college's annual venture incubator LaunchU. They partner with nonprofits to present community-wide music programming with a cause. Their first event, in April 2018, was a benefit at a Cleveland-area church that included performances by 11 conservatory students. It raised more than \$2,000 for the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless.

Faculty Notes



LeFebvre

On a campus that celebrates its many versatile faculty performers, Associate Professor of Singing **Timothy LeFebvre** is among the most active of them all. During the 2017-18 year, LeFebvre sang Mahler's *Rückert-Lieder* with the Oberlin Chamber Orchestra in October and took on Schumann's *Liederkreis* with collaborative pianist **Tony Cho** just two weeks later. His itinerary diverged from Oberlin in November for Haydn's *Creation* with the Wichita Symphony, followed in December by performances of Handel's *Messiah* with the Toledo Symphony, the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, and the Binghamton Philharmonic. The new year brought Schubert's *Winterreise* with the Finger Lakes Chamber Ensemble, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the Arcadia Chorale, and Vaughan Williams' *Dona nobis pacem* at Kent State University. On campus in the spring, LeFebvre sang Crumb's *African American Spirituals* with the Oberlin Percussion Ensemble and Liptak's *Ancient Songs* with Oberlin Sinfonietta. In October, he served as a judge for the Mildred Miller International Voice

Competition in Pittsburgh. "It is important for my students to see their teacher being active as a performer," LeFebvre said in the fall. "I often share my experiences with them so that they understand how the business works."

Flute professor **Alexa Still** performed Elliott Carter's Flute Concerto at the gala concert of the National Flute Association's convention in Minneapolis in August 2017. Her latest CD, *Syzygy*, was released on the Oberlin Music label in January 2018.

Assistant Professor of Singing **Kendra Colton '83** has released her third CD of J.S. Bach arias and duets from the sacred cantatas. Appearing with her on this edition is faculty baritone **Timothy LeFebvre** and flutist Will Adams '19 along with members of Emmanuel Music in Boston. Adams' participation came through the Bach Institute, a winter-term collaboration between Oberlin, Emmanuel Music, and Winsor Music. The CD is available on CD Baby and winsormusic.org.

Oberlin's first Faculty Chamber Series performance of the 2017-18 season included the world premiere of *Montfort*, a piece for oboe and piano that was written by pianist and composer André Previn and performed by Professor of Oboe and English Horn **Robert Walters** and Professor of Instrumental Accompanying **James Howsmon**. *Montfort* was written in August 2016; its premiere was offered to Walters by Previn's publisher. The concert took place September 10 in Warner Concert Hall. "I have always loved Previn's music, and for my forthcoming solo CD on the Oberlin Music

label, I had just finished recording his *Wedding Waltz* for two oboes and piano with Mingjia Liu '08, the principal oboist of the San Francisco Opera," says Walters. *Montfort* will also appear on the Oberlin Music release. Howsmon and Walters were two of five collaborators on another Oberlin Music project, *Convergent Winds: Music of Paul Hindemith*, released in June 2018. It also features clarinet professor **Richard Hawkins**, flute professor **Alexa Still**, and retired bassoon professor **George Sakakeeny**.

The Boston Modern Orchestra Project's recent recording of works by **Stephen Hartke** was named to the *New York Times* list of the 25 Best Classical Music Recordings of 2017. Titled after the featured work, *The Ascent of the Equestrian in a Balloon*, the album features pieces written over a span of 30 years, which confirms, according to critic Anthony Tommasini, that Hartke is "one of the most distinctive and important living composers."

Faculty composer **Elizabeth Ogonek's** *Sleep and Unremembrance* made its U.S. premiere at the 40th anniversary celebration of the American Composers Orchestra concert at Lincoln Center's Rose Hall in November 2017. The *New York Times* described Ogonek's orchestral work in this way: "Moment to moment ... the piece was alive with piercing sonorities and fraught with episodes that erupted in fits and starts." A live recording of Oberlin Orchestra's December performance of *Sleep and Unremembrance* was broadcast on WCLV 104.9-FM's *Cleveland Ovations* program in May 2018.



Jones

Assistant Professor of Composition **Jesse Jones** was one of two mid-career composers awarded the \$15,000 Goddard Lieberman Fellowship by the American Academy of Arts and Letters in March 2018. In the past year, conservatory ensembles and soloists performed numerous works by Jones, including his 2016 concerto *Persona Mechanica* (with guest pianist Xak Bjerken) and the premiere of *...innumerable stars, scattered in clusters*.



Hsu

In February 2018, TIMARA professor **Aurie Hsu '96** and collaborator Steven Kemper premiered a piece for sensor-equipped belly dancer, robotic percussion, and live-sound processing called *Why Should Our Bodies End at the Skin?* The choreography reflects the mechanical nature of robotic movement with isolations and body locks, while the robotic

percussion produces a visual and sonic echo of this movement through rhythmic and sustained textures. Hsu and Kemper also performed *Teka-Mori* for dancer, RAKS (Remote electroAcoustic Kinesthetic Sensing) system, and computer-generated sound at the 2018 conference of the Society for Electro-Acoustic Music in the United States (SEAMUS), held at the University of Oregon in March. Hsu was the recipient of an Ammerman Center for Arts and Technology 2018 commission through Connecticut College.

Valence, a work by TIMARA professor **Peter Swendsen '99**, was performed by the Gibney Dance Company in New York City in May 2018. Originally scored for Cleveland's GroundWorks DanceTheater in 2009, the piece draws on a broad palette of sonic choices, including many related to human, mechanical, and environmental "breath."

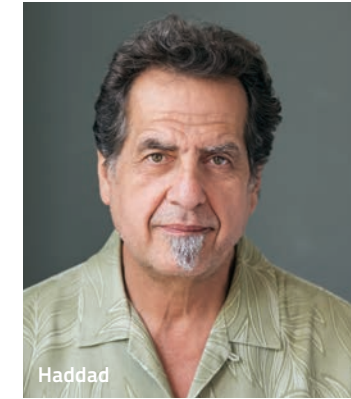
TIMARA professor **Tom Lopez '89** led an Artists on Art talk at the Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland in March 2018. He shared his interpretation of Éliane Radigue's 1970 tape and feedback composition *OMNHT*, using his own mediums and processes.

Associate Professor of Jazz Arranging **Jay Ashby** and TIMARA's **Peter Swendsen** collaborated on the original musical and sound score for the film *The Foreigner's Home*, by Oberlin cinema studies faculty **Rian Brown-Orso** and **Geoff Pingree**. The feature-length documentary explores the vision and work of Toni Morrison through the 2006 exhibition she guest curated at the Louvre. Performers on the soundtrack included bass professor **Peter**

Dominguez, pianist Sullivan Fortner '08, and drummer Zaire Darden '15.

Bass professor **Peter Dominguez** joined forces with Oberlin library colleagues **Alexia Hudson-Ward** and **Jeremy Smith** to create *Playing the Changes: The Life and Legacy of Milt Hinton*, a traveling exhibit about the legendary jazz bassist's life and contributions to the world of jazz. Based on Oberlin's extensive collection of artifacts chronicling Hinton's career, the exhibit has been presented at Beck Center for the Arts near Cleveland, the Sandusky Cultural Center in wife Mona Hinton's Ohio hometown, and the Cleveland Public Library. On display in Oberlin during summer 2018 in conjunction with the biennial Milt Hinton Institute for Studio Bass, *Playing the Changes* will complete the year at the Tuskegee University Legacy Museum in Alabama. Dominguez also played several solo recitals in the past year, including the 2017 International Society of Bassists convention at Ithaca College.

Professor of Jazz Guitar **Bobby Ferrazza** and a pair of newly minted Oberlin jazz graduates took part in a series of concerts and workshops across South Africa in June 2018, and also worked on a recording project there. Produced by the University of South Africa Music Foundation and the U.S. Embassy, the tour—dubbed The South African Jazz Songbook— included stops in Pretoria, Tshwane, Durban, and Johannesburg. Ferrazza was joined by bassist Emma Adomeit '18 and pianist Michael Orenstein '18, who were part of a septet featuring other musicians from the U.S. and South Africa.



Haddad

Professor of Percussion and Advanced Improvisation **Jamey Haddad** brought his group, the Jamey Haddad International All-Stars, to the stage of Nighttown in Cleveland Heights, Ohio, for a collaboration with accordionist/bandoneónist Julien Labro in March 2018. The ensemble included Oberlin students and alums: pianist Michael Orenstein '18, acoustic bassist Emma Adomeit '18, percussionist Patrick Graney '17, and sax player Birsa Chatterjee '19.

In February 2018, violist **Kirsten Docter '92** was the soloist in Benjamin Britten's *Lachrymae* with the Heights Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Domenico Boyagian at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Cleveland.



Meints

Associate Professor of Viola da Gamba and Cello **Catharina Meints** was the featured performer with Brandywine Baroque in March 2018. She

collaborated with Oberlin alumna and former trustee Karen Flint '64, a harpsichordist and artistic director of the ensemble. Meints continues to serve the Viola da Gamba Society of America as a member of the board of directors and presenter at conferences and seminars. From July 23 through 30, she will be teaching at the Viola da Gamba Conclave at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. At least 30 of the 150 attendees (faculty and students) boast Oberlin connections through the conservatory or the Baroque Performance Institute. Meints' new e-book, *The Oberlin Baroque Performance Institute: The Wenzinger Years*, is slated for release in summer 2018.



Breitman

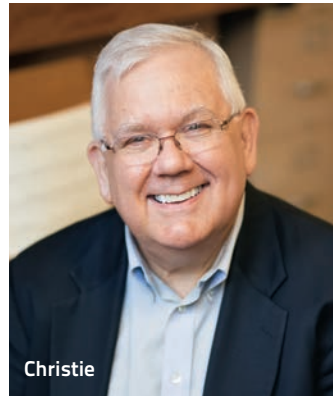
In February 2018, historical performance keyboard professor **David Breitman** took his 1819-era fortepiano on the road with baritone Thomas Meglioranza in a performance of Schubert's *Winterreise* at the Byron Colby Barn in Grayslake, Ill. In a preview interview with Chicago's *Lake County Sun-News*, Meglioranza called Breitman "an extremely great and sensitive pianist. He was the accompanist for one of my baritone heroes. I idolized them as a singer and piano duo. They were so communicative and their partnership was so tight." The performance was part of the Early Music at the Barn series.

Faculty Notes

Piano professor **Angela Cheng** continues to perform with Pinchas Zukerman and Amanda Forsyth as the Zukerman Trio. Their latest tour led them to Russia, Germany, Australia, Argentina, the Canary Islands, and throughout the United States in cities including Chicago, Detroit, Savannah, and Washington, D.C. As a soloist, Cheng performed with Minas Gerais Symphony in Brazil, the Dayton Philharmonic in Ohio, and with orchestras in Vancouver and Victoria, British Columbia; Edmonton, Alberta; and with Orchestre Metropolitan in Montreal, under the direction of Yannick Nézet-Séguin.

Piano professor **Alvin Chow** was presented as a Convention Artist for the California and Tennessee conferences of the Music Teachers National Association. He performed duo recitals with **Angela Cheng** at the Colburn School in Los Angeles and at the University of Cincinnati. He performed with his other duo partner, twin brother Alan Chow, in concert at the Mozarthaus in Vienna, the University of Oklahoma, and Union University in Tennessee. He also taught master classes at the Haydn Konservatorium in Eisenstadt, Austria. In fall 2017, Chow was awarded the Excellence in Teaching Award at Oberlin.

Professor of Organ **James David Christie '75** was named International Performer of the Year for 2017 by the American Guild of Organists' New York City Chapter, the organization's largest chapter by far. Christie received the news in October as he boarded a flight to Europe during Oberlin's fall break. While there, he taught, performed, and served on juries



Christie

for international competitions in Italy and Amsterdam. "Nobody was more shocked than I was. I was getting on a plane and I opened my email for one last time, and it blew me over. I was so excited!" he says, noting the significance of the award. Christie was honored at an AGO event in New York in spring 2018. He has taught at Oberlin since 2001 and has served as organist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra since 1978.



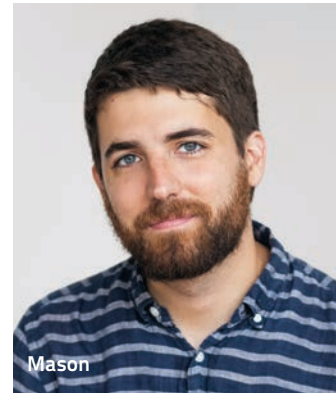
Fraser

Ethnomusicology professor **Jennifer Fraser** participated in a panel at the fall 2017 Society for Ethnomusicology annual meeting in Denver, where she joined with Oberlin colleagues **Jody Kerchner** and **Kathryn Metz** to discuss "Engaging Communities: Navigating the Dangers of Academic Baggage." In spring 2018, Fraser was invited to Cornell University for the Fourth Cornell Modern Indonesia Project's State of the

Field conference, where she presented her paper "Singing Naked Verses: Interactive Intimacies and Islamic Moralities in Saluang Performances in West Sumatra." Fraser also designed and led a winter-term trip that focused on culture and sustainability in disaster-ridden Indonesia, a project funded by the Luce Initiative on Asian Studies and the Environment. The interdisciplinary trip involved three other Oberlin faculty and eight students.

In the summer of 2017, Professor of Musicology **Charles McGuire '91** presented on the critical reaction to Richard Wagner's music at British musical festivals for the Opera and Print Culture in Nineteenth Century Britain conference at King's College London. In November, he presented on Edward Elgar's Cello Concerto at the British Music and Europe in the Age of Brexit conference at Duke University. McGuire devoted several weeks in January to continued research on musical festivals in Britain, visiting archives in Wales, Yorkshire, and the north of England. His video course, *The Great Works of Sacred Music*, released by The Teaching Company, has led to numerous speaking engagements, including pre-concert talks for the Cleveland Chamber Choir's current season.

Professor of Musicology **Claudia Macdonald** retired from Oberlin in spring 2018 after serving on the faculty for 29 years. A native of Portland, Ore., she earned a bachelor's degree from Brown University followed by an MA and PhD from the University of Chicago. She began her teaching career at Boston University.



Mason

Will Mason '10 served as visiting instructor of music theory at Oberlin Conservatory for 2017-18. During the year, he also completed his doctoral dissertation for Columbia University on issues surrounding technology, abstraction, and embodied timbre perception in French spectral music. Mason will be moving on to a tenure-track faculty position at Wheaton College in Massachusetts beginning in August 2018.

In November 2017, theory professor **Brian Alegant** gave the Oberlin College and Conservatory Presidential Lecture on "Irony in Schumann's *Dichterliebe*," during which he performed an excerpt from the work with Professor of Voice **Salvatore Champagne**. Alegant also performed Robert Morris' cycle *Cold Mountain Songs* (1993) with soprano Deborah Norin-Kuehn at the Eastman School of Music in October. He later performed and presented on the same cycle at a conference for 20th- and 21st-century song cycles for voice and piano at Michigan State University in April. Off stage, Alegant continues to write and publish "On Teaching Post-Tonal Aural Skills" in the *Norton Guide to Teaching Music Theory*.



Alegant and Champagne

Associate Professor of Music Theory **Andrew Pau** presented a paper at a conference at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, England, in March 2018. The five-day program, "Claude Debussy in 2018: A Centenary Celebration," marked the 100th anniversary of Debussy's death. Pau joined guest speakers from 13 countries to explore the composer's editions and sketches, critical and interpretive approaches, textual and cultural-historical analyses, and his legacy in performance, recording, composition, and arrangement. Pau's paper "The Six Épigraphe Antiques and Debussy's (Re)compositional Process" addressed Debussy's "Style in History." In fall 2017, Pau reached the semifinal round of the *Jeopardy!* Tournament of Champions.

Professor Emerita of Music Education **Peggy Bennett** devoted more than 40 years to studying the processes of learning and living. With certifications in teaching, mediation, and life coaching, Bennett was inspired to write

her seventh book, *Teaching with Vitality—Pathways to Health and Wellness for Teachers and Schools*. Published by Oxford University Press in November 2017, the book presents common experiences and practical options for minimizing conflict while addressing the challenges of teaching and maintaining collegiality in schools.

Jody Kerchner, professor of music education and director of the conservatory's Division of Pedagogy, Advocacy, and Community Engagement (PACE), presented a lecture titled "Then Sings My Soul: Incarceration, Rehabilitation & Reintegration Through Music" at St. Mary's College of Notre Dame. Kerchner served as a panel co-presenter with Oberlin ethnomusicology colleagues **Kathryn Metz** and **Jennifer Fraser** at the 2017 Society for Ethnomusicology Conference in Denver.

Director of Conservatory Professional Development and Associate Professor of Contemporary Music and Improvisation **Dana Jessen**

performed Michael Gordon's *Rushes* with the Rushes Ensemble at the 2018 Big Ears Festival and at OZ Arts in Nashville. She presented world-premiere performances of works written for her contemporary chamber ensemble, Splinter Reeds, by Sky Macklay and Paula Matthusen. Macklay's work, *Choppy* (2017), was made possible through Chamber Music America's Classical Commissioning Grant. Matthusen's *Antenna Studies* (2018) was supported by the Blue Sage Center for the Arts and a New Music U.S.A. grant. This year, Jessen and Splinter Reeds held residencies at the University of Texas at Austin's Butler School of Music, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and the Blue Sage Center for the Arts in Colorado. Jessen also presented solo recitals of her program *Carve* at the Music from the Americas series at the University of New Mexico and Out of the Box series at Philadelphia's University of the Arts. She was a featured soloist at Innova's 2018 Inn-Fest in Minneapolis, which features musicians from the Innova Recordings label. The album has been praised in reviews and was included on Steve Smith's Noteworthy Recordings of 2017.

Kathy Abromeit, public services librarian in the Conservatory Library, edited the book *Ideas, Strategies, and Scenarios in Music Information Literacy*. The multi-author volume offers guidance on planning and implementing programs in a wide range of instructional situations. Abromeit also contributed a chapter to the book *Peer Instruction in the Oberlin*

Conservatory Library: Three Models of Engagement. Activities of the student reference assistants in the Conservatory Library are highlighted in the chapter. Abromeit also presented the paper "Creating Neural Pathways with Mindfulness: Music Information Literacy and the First-Year Music Student" at the annual meeting of the 2018 Music Library Association in Portland, Ore.



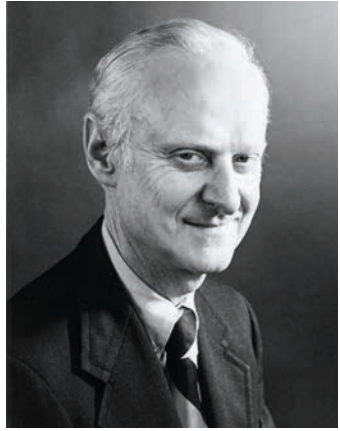
Campana

Deborah Campana, head of the conservatory library, was invited to present the paper "When Opportunity Knocks, Listen to the Hammer," which details Oberlin's library renovation and expansion projects. The paper was given during a session called New Paradigms for Space Utilization in Music Libraries at the annual meeting of the 2018 Music Library Association in Portland, Ore.

William Quillen joined the conservatory as associate dean for academic affairs at the beginning of the 2017-18 academic year. In November 2017, Quillen's chapter "The Idea of the 1920s in Russian Music Today" was published in the book *Russian Music Since 1917: Reappraisal and Rediscovery* (Oxford University Press, for the British Academy, 2017).

Losses

In honor of faculty who died in the past year



Flute master devoted 37 years to teaching at Oberlin

ROBERT WILLOUGHBY (1921-2018)

Robert Willoughby was an esteemed professor of flute at Oberlin for 37 years, during which he developed the craft of some 200 future performers and teachers while maintaining a vibrant playing career of his own. He died March 27, 2018, one year after friends and family had established an endowed scholarship in his honor.

Born in Grundy Center, Iowa, Willoughby earned a degree from the Eastman School of Music in 1942, then enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps, training as a B-24 bomber pilot. From his station in southern Great Britain, he flew the first of three dozen career missions on his 23rd birthday: a run over the English Channel to Normandy on June 6, 1944—D-Day.

After the war, Willoughby took up graduate studies with Georges Laurent at the New England Conservatory. A year later, he became assistant principal flute of the Cleveland Orchestra, where he remained for nine years, six of which he also spent teaching part time at Oberlin. Willoughby eventually

left northeast Ohio to become principal flute of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, but after a year was lured back to Oberlin with the offer of a full-time position. In 1957, he married children's book author Elaine "Mac" Macmann, and they settled in Oberlin for the next three decades.

A master of modern flute—*Flute* magazine called him "the American grandmaster"—Willoughby also took up playing the Baroque flute in 1970 after studying it in Europe during a sabbatical year, making him among the first major American flutists to cross over into historical performance. He was a founding member of the Oberlin Woodwind Quintet and the Oberlin Baroque Ensemble, and he was a fixture at Oberlin's annual Baroque Performance Institute beginning with its founding in 1971. He was a charter member of the National Flute Association, which bestowed upon him its Lifetime Achievement Award in 1996.

"When one hears Bob Willoughby's students, there's almost a guarantee that no two will sound the same," says Wendy Rolfe '74, a professor of flute at the Berklee College of Music and a driving force behind the establishment of the Willoughby Scholarship Fund. "He always encouraged us to think for ourselves and to make our own informed musical decisions."

By 1987, Willoughby and his wife traded Oberlin for a newly built island home off the coast of New Hampshire. He taught for a decade at the Peabody Institute and later at the Longy School of Music in Boston. He is survived by a son and three grandchildren, and he was preceded in death by his wife.



Electroacoustic composer initiated courses on African American music

OLLY WILSON (1937-2018)

Associate Professor of Composition Olly Wilson laid the groundwork for Technology in Music and Related Arts (TIMARA) at Oberlin five years before the department was formally established.

A member of the Oberlin Conservatory faculty from 1965 to 1970, Wilson taught music theory and composition courses, as well as the first known course on African American music. He is widely credited with having observed in the late 1960s that the basement of Bibbins Hall would make a fine setting for an electronic music studio. TIMARA has called that basement home since its founding in 1973.

Wilson went on to a long and varied career as a professor and administrator at the University of California, Berkeley, and he remained an active and acclaimed composer for many years. He died March 12, 2018, at age 80.

"Olly Wilson was a pioneer in many wonderful capacities, and the TIMARA Department is honored to consider him the

inspirational origin of our program," says Associate Professor Tom Lopez '89. "His open-minded and experimental approach to working with electronic media, particularly in conjunction with acoustic instruments, continues to this day in the creativity I see in our students."

Born and raised in St. Louis, Wilson took to playing piano, clarinet, and bassoon in his school and church. He played jazz piano and classical bass at Washington University in St. Louis, earning spots in the orchestra and chamber orchestra. By his sophomore year, he realized he wanted to be a composer, and he eventually found himself gravitating toward the twelve-tone serialism of Arnold Schoenberg, in which he fully indulged throughout his graduate studies in composition at the University of Illinois. In 1964, he added a PhD from the University of Iowa.

After teaching for several years at Florida A&M University, Wilson was appointed to the Oberlin faculty in the summer of 1965, the first full-time black faculty member in the conservatory's history. A prolific composer, Wilson contributed works to Oberlin's long-standing Festival of Contemporary Music every year he was on the faculty. Each piece showcased wave after wave of influences, and he became increasingly enamored of pairing acoustic instruments with electronic sounds.

In 1967, Wilson and numerous other faculty composers who shared an interest in electronic music earned a grant from the National Science Foundation that by 1969 yielded a collection including computers, testing instruments, Moog and ARP

synthesizers, a mixer, and a patch bay. The ARP continues to be used by Oberlin TIMARA students today.

In 1968, Wilson won first prize at the International Electronic Music Competition at Dartmouth College, the first competition ever devoted to electronic music. By 1970, he left Oberlin for Berkeley, where he taught for 22 years. He was honored in 1974 by the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the National Institute of Arts and Letters. He earned a Rome Prize in 2008.

Upon hearing of Wilson's death, faculty and students in the TIMARA Department created a memorial in his honor outside the studios' main entrance: a computer set up to play music he had written.

Wilson is survived by his wife, Elouise Woods Wilson; a son and daughter; and six grandchildren.



Baritone sang in response to Kent State shootings

HOWARD HATTON (1917-2018)

Howard Hatton, a member of the conservatory voice faculty for 38 years, remained active in the community for many years after retirement, enjoying

regular breakfasts in Oberlin with friends and faculty past and present. Hatton died February 5, 2018, eight months after celebrating his 100th birthday with loved ones at Kendal at Oberlin.

"He was a very gentle soul," says Daune Mahy, a longtime professor of singing whose Oberlin career overlapped with Hatton's final seven years on the faculty. "His students loved him, and they were really devoted to him. He was always a very sweet, very convivial person."

Raised in Trinidad, Colorado, a young Hatton lived the life of a cowboy on his family farm and on neighboring ranches during his teen years. He earned a bachelor's degree in music education from the University of Colorado at Boulder in 1939 and a master's in voice from the University of Michigan in 1941 before being drafted into the U.S. Army later that year. In the service, he took part in war bond shows, directed choruses, and sang as a soloist and in chapel choirs.

After the war, he completed a master's degree in music literature at Michigan and taught there during summers. Following an appointment at Allegheny College, he joined the Oberlin faculty in 1949.

In Oberlin, Hatton served as director of the Chapel Choir from 1950 to 1956 and was a soloist in numerous area churches for many years. In May 1970, in the days following the shootings at Kent State University, Hatton played a pivotal role in Oberlin's response to the violence: He was the baritone soloist in a performance of Mozart's *Requiem* at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., a concert organized by legendary Oberlin choir director Robert Fountain.



Pianist became the first tenured black female professor

FRANCES WALKER (1924-2018)

In January 1976, pianist and educator Frances Walker '45 returned to her alma mater to play a bicentennial concert celebrating the music of black composers. Her Oberlin performance so moved administrators that she was hired on the spot to teach that fall. Three years later, she became the first black woman to be granted tenure at Oberlin, where she taught until her retirement in 1991.

Outspoken throughout her life, Walker showcased the music of black composers, battled for gender equity in salary, and strode confidently into an interracial marriage amid a torrent of condemnation. Through the years, she was also beloved by her students, many of whom went on to standout careers of their own.

Born in Washington, D.C., Walker was raised alongside her brother, Pulitzer Prize-winning composer George Walker '41, hon. DM '83. She sustained severe burns in a fire at age 5 and suffered a long and painful recovery that included a yearlong stint in the hospital

and numerous surgeries, especially to her right arm. She later pursued studies at Oberlin primarily because it was the only college at the time willing to confer undergraduate degrees to black students.

Walker began teaching at Barber-Scotia College in North Carolina in 1947, then joined the faculty of Tougaloo College in Mississippi a year later. There, she met history professor Henry Chester Slocum '48, a white man with whom she relocated to New York City to marry, in defiance of Mississippi laws prohibiting interracial marriage.

In New York, Walker earned an MA from Columbia University Teachers' College in 1952 and a professional diploma in 1971. She taught piano for seven years at the Third Street Music School Settlement before taking up a four-year residency at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. By 1972, she was appointed assistant professor of piano at Rutgers University, where she remained even through her first years of teaching at Oberlin, relocating only after the death of her husband in 1980. An avid performer, Walker debuted at Carnegie Hall in 1959 and for decades played engagements at major venues across the U.S. and beyond.

At Oberlin, she served as chair of the piano department, president of Pi Kappa Lambda, and chair of the Special Educational Opportunities Program, which supported minority groups. In 1979 and again in 1985, she was honored by the National Association of Negro Musicians. In 2004, she was awarded the Alumni Medal from Oberlin College.

"I remember Frances Walker's sound—deep, noble, unhurried—which made all

Losses

music, especially Brahms and Liszt, sound profound,” says Professor of Piano Peter Takács.

“She was an important resource and role model for African American pianists, providing support and encouragement whenever it was needed, and she was an important member of our department. She will be missed.”

In retirement, Walker wrote the autobiography *A Miraculous Journey*, and she remained generous to Oberlin, informally funding scholarships for conservatory students.

Her far-reaching impact could be felt even in her final months: In March 2018, scores of adoring friends, faculty, and former students gathered to pay tribute in honor of her 94th birthday. The celebration included a screening at the Apollo Theatre of *Still Dreaming*, a documentary about Walker by filmmaker Charles Kaufmann.

Walker died June 9, 2018, at her home in Oberlin. She is survived by her son Jeffrey, a granddaughter, and her brother.



Longtime Cleveland Orchestra bassist loved jazz, craved adventure

LAWRENCE ANGELL (1929-2017)

Lawrence Angell played double bass for the Cleveland Orchestra from 1955 to 1995, an appointment made by legendary music director George Szell. Angell was also a member of the string faculty at Oberlin from 1980 to 1990, preparing student musicians for

positions in major orchestras across the country and around the world. Throughout his life, he indulged a passion for adventure that included piloting his own plane—his passengers included Pierre Boulez and Leon Fleisher—and skydiving.

As a young musician, Angell spent summers studying with Oscar Zimmerman at the Interlochen National Music Camp until he was summoned to serve in the Korean War. Trained as a cannoneer, he was assigned instead to the 7th Infantry Division Band and Jazz Band and performed for fellow soldiers on the front lines.

Following his service, Angell resumed studies with Zimmerman at the Eastman School of Music, where he earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees as well as a performer’s certificate. While still a student, he performed with the Rochester Philharmonic under Erich Leinsdorf before his appointment by Szell to the

Cleveland Orchestra, of which he eventually became principal bass. Over the course of his career, he took part in the creation of some 500 recordings.

In addition to his work at Oberlin, Angell served on the bass faculty at the Cleveland Institute of Music from 1969 to 1999, and he was an active coach and teacher at festivals around the country. After retiring, he coauthored the well-received book *Tales from the Locker Room: An Anecdotal Portrait of George Szell and His Cleveland Orchestra*.

Angell harbored a profound love not only of classical music but also jazz, which he played in Cleveland-area clubs. A man of numerous hobbies, he enjoyed tennis, bodybuilding, art, race cars, and riding motorcycles in any weather—a habit that earned him the nickname “Szell’s Angell.”

Angell died December 3, 2017. He is survived by his wife of 36 years, classical pianist Anita Pontremoli, as well as five children and four grandchildren.

Cabaret pianist Joe Clonick '57 maintained close ties to Oberlin throughout his life



A former composition student at Oberlin, Joe Clonick (1936-2018) was a gifted improviser who enjoyed a long career as a cabaret pianist in New York and his native Chicago.

Born into some measure of wealth—Clonick’s father owned a successful industrial wrecking business—he was fortunate to be able to follow his muse throughout life. Invariably, that meant following the music: He began his career playing in various short-lived Chicago cabarets, then for three decades forged a life in New York City. There, he toiled at the theater workshop of Broadway composer Lehman

Engel and played countless parties, his world intersecting with no shortage of legendary performers.

Through it all, Clonick relished a simple life—a life he never managed to find in New York. “I told everyone for 31 years that I was just passing through,” he said in 2014. “I always knew I’d eventually come back to Chicago.” Clonick returned to the Windy City in 2000 to care for his ailing mother, and he enjoyed performing regularly for his local synagogue.

Though his health faltered in recent years, Clonick remained a robust supporter of Oberlin,

funding scholarships for composition students for many years. He was also instrumental in the construction of the Bertram and Judith Kohl Building: His \$5 million pledge led to the creation of the recording studio that bears his name. Clonick Hall is used for student and professional recordings, master classes, rehearsals, lectures, and performances.

“I know that people feel grateful for it, and that’s very rewarding for me,” Clonick said in 2014. “If you ever run into them,” he added slyly, “tell ‘em I’m grateful for their gratitude.”

Clonick died March 31, 2018.



OBERLIN COLLEGE & CONSERVATORY

ARTIST RECITAL SERIES 2018-19

A CELEBRATION OF THE ARTS AT OBERLIN SINCE 1878

SEPTEMBER 21 THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA
FEATURING ALEXANDRE THARAUD, PIANO

FEBRUARY 22 DORIC STRING QUARTET

OCTOBER 14 JAMES EHNES, VIOLIN
ANDREW ARMSTRONG, PIANO

FEBRUARY 27 JOYCE DIDONATO & SONGPLAY

NOVEMBER 18 THE ROMEROS

APRIL 3 PIOTR ANDERSZEWSKI, PIANO

DECEMBER 9 MASTER CLASS WITH MARILYN HORNE

APRIL 17 THE SPRING QUARTET
JACK DEJOHNETTE, DRUMS
LEO GENOVESE, PIANO
JOE LOVANO, SAXOPHONE
ESPERANZA SPALDING, BASS

Artists and dates are subject to change. Subscriptions and partial-season packages are available. For ticket information, visit oberlin.edu/artsguide.

OBERLIN
COLLEGE & CONSERVATORY

BE A FRIEND! Our season is made possible in part by Oberlin’s Friends of the Artist Recital Series. Please call 440-775-8200 to learn how becoming a Friend supports the arts at Oberlin.

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
OBERLIN COLLEGE

"TRUST THAT LATER ON IN LIFE,
THERE'S SOMETHING BIGGER FOR
YOU WHEN YOU SERVE OTHERS."

—SONNY ROLLINS